OUR CAVALRY

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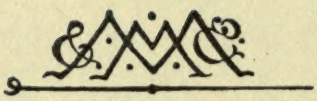
Military Text-Books

OUR CAVALRY



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OUR CAVALRY

BY

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PREFACE

In this book no attempt has been made to produce an exhaustive treatise on Cavalry; it has been written principally for junior officers of all arms.

M. F. R.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

"We study the past to foresee the future."

In these bustling days of headline-up-to-date newspapers, one shrinks from reminding one's readers that Xenophon gave excellent advice to cavalry trainers and leaders—advice which a cavalryman will recognize is quite as applicable to-day as it was in those distant ages; since details with regard to grooming horses on hard stones, exercising cavalry in rough ground, and so on are by no means out of date. There is every reason to believe that Alexander, and later Rome and Carthage at their zenith as military nations, had proportionately as highly-trained cavalry as is possessed by any nation of to-day. Those who have fought in rearguards and running fights realize that the Parthian method of fighting must have required the highest training and *moral*. The cavalry of the predominant nations were drawn from those who kept horses for their own sport and amusement, and for the gratification of their pride, and who felt they were better fighting men on a horse. The descendants of the horse-lovers

of those ages are with us to-day; they are those who love danger, excitement, and pace, and who find in the blood-horse an animal which shares their love for these, and will generously sacrifice its life or limbs in the co-partnership.

Those who have never felt the sensation of a really good horse bounding and stretching away under them, and the consequent elation, the wonder as to "what could stop us?" cannot grasp what a cavalry soldier's feelings are in the "Charge."

Following the centuries which saw the final success of the ordered phalanx of Rome, time after time the more savage races of horsemen—Attila with his Hunnish squadrons or Abdur-Rahman with Moslem hordes—drive all before them, anticipating the flight of peace-loving, easy-going farmers and traders, living on the country and carrying off what pleases them.

Then held sway

> The good old rule . . . the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

Ages roll by, the picture changes. The days of Norman chivalry animate and fire the imagination. The hunter warriors, knights, and squires lead their troops in battle array, throwing them into the combat at the decisive moment.

Broken bones incurred whilst unhorsing a friend, or a shrewd spear-thrust when cleaving to the chine a foe, in single combat, were adventures by no means to be declined or avoided.

Chivalry or enthusiastic religious zeal qualify the

rougher side of their devotion to arms and horsemanship.

In all ages the horse-lovers, the best-mounted nations, have carried all before them. *Ceteris paribus* this is true to-day. Then came the days of "villainous saltpetre," and many began to doubt and to number the days of cavalry; and always after a time there rises the cavalry leader who, emerging from the dangers of a youth spent in war and sport, sees that pace, weight, *moral*, and the "àpropos" make up for all the odds, if only leaders, men, and horses are trained, and their weight and pace rightly applied.

Next in order come Gustavus Adolphus; Cromwell, our great cavalry leader, and his Ironsides riding knee to knee, and rallying immediately after the shock; Frederick the Great, and his captains, Ziethen and Seydlitz, and their ordered application of masses of cavalry. Then grand old Blücher,[1] and his antagonists of the Napoleonic era, Murat, Lasalle, Curély.

Certain fixed principles keep cropping up which appear to have guided these heroes in their movements and dispositions. They are :—

A. Cohesion in the ranks, or knee-to-knee riding.
B. The moral effect of advancing horsemen.
C. The flank march.
D. The "àpropos" charge ridden well home.

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[1] Blücher, two days before Waterloo and then seventy years of age, but as hard as nails and quite indefatigable, was charging at the head of the Treskow Brigade, when his horse fell on him and he was left at the mercy of the French cuirassiers. Luckily he was not recognized, and when his own side again charged, he was pulled from under his horse and got away on that of a sergeant.

E. Surprise.
F. The immediate rally.
G. The necessity of a reserve.
H. Training of the individual man and horse.
I. Care of the horse's condition.

The more we are able to read and learn of their views of training, leading, and applying the shock of cavalry, the more we see how little which is new can be written on the subject.

The same view may be taken of the fire action of cavalry. The best cavalry leaders have always recognized its great value, where not put forward as an alternative to the "àpropos" charge, and when not substituted by the "weakening" leader for the dangerous but more decisive shock action—that action in which we must have "no half measures, no irresolution."[1] But the very fact that they may themselves have at some time weakened to the extent of shooting at the enemy from afar, instead of resolutely going in at the unknown, must have made these leaders recognize that the "charge" must be kept in the front as our ideal.

Those who cannot understand the predilection of the most advanced and thoughtful cavalry soldiers for *l'arme blanche* should ponder on the success of the Zulu dynasty. Its founder insisted that his men should be armed only with the stabbing assegai and would not allow them to throw their assegais. He knew what shock tactics meant and the *moral* inspired by their successful adoption.

[1] Von Schmidt, p. 229.

A study of history shows the advocacy of ballistics from the horse at a charging enemy to have been periodic during the last 2000 years in peace time, and also that failure has invariably followed its adoption in war. It is not now seriously considered by any nation.

Whatever the cost, whatever the method, he who tries first to "handle" his enemy is the one with whom "*moral*," that incalculable factor, will rest. Hear what a great trainer of cavalry, writing probably over fifty years ago, said :—[1]

> It cannot be too often repeated that the main thing is to carry out the mission *at any price.* If possible this should be done mounted and with the *arme blanche*, but should that not be feasible, then we must dismount and force a road with the carbine. I am convinced that cavalry would not be up to the requirements of to-day if they were not able under certain circumstances to fight on foot, nor would it be worth the sacrifice that it costs the state.

But if the croakers were alarmed at a sputtering rifle fire, what will the faint-hearted of our time say to the new and alarming factor which has now been introduced. Batteries of horse artillery, firing up to sixty or more low trajectory shells per minute, must now be reckoned with. These shells contain 236 bullets, weighing 41 to the pound.

If the de Blochs and other theorists paused and wondered what would happen to cavalry when magazine rifles were invented, what will be their attitude now? Let them be reassured. But the

[1] Von Schmidt, p. 188.

words of those who reassure them must ring true and be purified from the dross of the first thought, "How can we do this and save our own skins?" Let them be born of the stern resolve, "At all costs we will kill, capture, or put to flight our enemies." We must evolve tactics which will enable us to use every new factor and to deny them to the foe.[1]

Leave them to judge whether the plan of those tactics will be dashed off by the pen of the ready-writer as a result of experiences gained during a Whitsun-week holiday on some suburban training ground, or whether the soldier who has felt the sharp stress of an enemy's victory, the heavy hand of adversity and the rough lessons of retreat, who has seen the barometer of his men's fate rise and fall under cyclonic conditions, will painfully and doubtfully elaborate it.

Cromwell, Frederick, Galliffet, these with bitter experience of the everyday imperfections of human nature, and a well-weighed determination to insist on tactics which will override those weaknesses, did not attempt to avoid or shirk the difficulty of losses. A cool contempt for the contingencies is the primary qualification in the search for successful methods in cavalry tactics, as well as in the encounter itself.

Turning now to the detached duties of cavalry,

[1] All the principal students of war of the type of Von Hoenig, "A. A.," Lewal, Von Schmidt, Galliffet, Kaehler, Prince Kraft, Verdy du Vernois, Cherfils, Meckel, Waldor de Heusch, Von Schell, and others in a minor degree, express unlimited confidence in the possibilities of cavalry if trained according to a sufficiently high standard.—Elliot, *Cavalry Literature*, Preface.

To preserve the superiority of an army in war, the system of tactics must be changed every ten years.—Colonel Bonie.

of security and information, no less do we see the recurrence of the same ideas. The Curélys and de Bracks, the Mosbys, the cavalry who, "like a heavy shower of rain, can get through anywhere," such come right down to us from ancient history.

The daring hearts who, trusting in a good horse and a knowledge of woodcraft, torment the enemy, whether in camp, bivouac, on the march, or on the line of communication, are a product of all campaigns, ready to the hand of those who know where to find them, and how to inspire them aright so as to get the very best out of them. And what will good men not dare and undergo for a word of praise or encouragement from one whose soul is in what he says?

Again and again, what is learnt in the hard school of campaigning, and generally where that campaign has been lost, carries the best lesson. Has any nation set itself more resolutely to correct the faults of its cavalry [1] than the French nation after the 1870 war?

Conversely, the nation that wins, learns little or nothing; no lesson is worse than that of easy success in small wars. Witness the Russian successes in Central Asia for a series of years, followed by the *débâcle* of their cavalry action in the Manchurian War when pitted against an enemy whose cavalry was scarcely "in being," [2] and the erroneous conclusions arrived at in regard to cavalry by those

[1] Colonel Bonie, speaking of the French cavalry before the war of 1870-71, says: "In the midst of this indifference war suddenly broke out and we were obliged to appear on the field with our old ideas and our old mistakes."

[2] This is written with the reservation that experience shows that much of the best and most useful work rendered to an army by its cavalry is never

who only saw the first portion of the operations in South Africa 1899-1902.

Von Moltke is credited with saying: "People say one must learn by experience; I have always endeavoured to learn by the experience of others."

The real lessons learnt from war are extremely difficult to impress on the taxpayer, who, in modern Great Britain, only reads of them in the newspaper, and who at best does not wish to pay for one more cavalry soldier than is absolutely necessary.

The cavalry leader must recognize that the arm is expensive, therefore it cannot afford to be inactive; it is the hardest arm to replace, therefore it must be used to the full.

In all ages cavalry[1] have been expensive, and one may well wonder if the frugal mind of the taxpayer balances them against who can say what pictures of dead and wounded, indemnity, pillage, lost trade, and damaged prestige, or whether he looks at one side of

known and certainly not recorded. The effectual manner in which General Samsonov, after the battle of Telissu, checked pursuit, held off, and at the same time kept touch with the Japanese for three weeks or more, is dismissed in a few lines of history.

[1] An American, writing in 1899, delivered the following prophecy: "Cavalry may be an expensive arm to organize, equip, and subsist, but if it comes to a matter of dollars and cents the security of the British Army in recent reverses would have been worth a million times what an effective cavalry screen might have cost. From the moral effect of the recent defeats the war in South Africa is expected to cost the British Government between 100 million and 300 million dollars." Later he adds: "Let not our legislators forget in the coming reorganization of our army the importance, nay the economy in money and lives which cannot be measured by money, of maintaining an adequate force of cavalry. Cavalry cannot be made in a month from militia. The transformation process is slow. Given brave and fearless men, well-bred horses, expert marksmen, improved arms and equipments, it is not necessarily cavalry. Training is necessary and training takes time, but when war begins, time is the one element which is most in demand."

the balance-sheet only, and forgets that from which they may save him.

Ignoring these mundane views, it is still the duty of the cavalry leader who has patriotism in his soul, to keep his heart young and his muscles trained, and to leave no stone unturned in peace time in his preparation, as a sacred duty, for war; just as in war it is his duty to sacrifice his men, his reputation, his horses, everything, in order to turn the tide of battle or render the victory decisive.

Let officers of cavalry remember that he who in peace time cannot sacrifice his pleasures to his duty, will in war find it much harder to give up his life or aggrandisement, possibly in accordance with an idea or order with which he does not agree, or in which he sees no sense.

This is the serious side; mercifully there is a lighter side to war, and it is well known that the hair-breadth escapes of themselves or others, and the "hard tack" form the most amusing and abiding recollections of a war to those who have participated in it.

Against ill chances men are ever merry.

Withal no cavalry leader is likely to succeed unless there is something of the gambler's spirit in him, the gambler who can coolly and calmly put down his everything on the cards :—

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his deserts are small,
That dares not put it to the touch,
To gain or lose it all.

CHAPTER II

ARMAMENT

"Quot homines tot sententiae."

Armament also figures largely amongst conditions of success. . . . There can certainly never be complete disparity between the armament and the *moral* of an army, since the latter includes intelligence which takes care to provide good weapons. The want of good armament immediately reacts upon the confidence of the soldier. Defeat would thus appear excusable, and success cannot have a worse enemy than this feeling.—Von der Goltz, *Nation in Arms*, p. 147.

The many changes through which regiments of cavalry go in this respect are hardly credible, although in our case allowance must be made for the many different enemies which a British cavalry regiment meets. The lance will be adopted instead of or in addition to the sword, and six or seven years later the sword alone, or perhaps even rifle alone, will be carried.[1] It may be regarded as a certainty now that for some years to come, as in the past, the Germans will arm both ranks with the lance. One has hardly written this before one reads that the bayonet may be substituted for the sword in the armament of German cavalry regiments, for use in

[1] A cavalry reformer, writing sixty or more years ago, says: "What is the use of trying to get the authorities to abolish the steel scabbard, when no attention was paid to a similar request fifty years ago?"

night attacks and in the attack of unturnable small positions, or when occasion may arise.

The bayonet on trial is straight, 14 inches long, with one cutting edge, the back being flat. All under-officers and one-tenth of the troops will carry a bayonet furnished with a saw edge.

History repeats itself. In 1805, Napoleon organized dragoons who carried a bayonet as well as a sword. There may have been a reason for this, as their usual fate was to be dismounted and their horses given to remount more highly-trained cavalry.

Von Bernhardi[1] sums up the question of this new armament of the German cavalry as follows: "The hand-to-hand fight on foot must be exceptional. To injure the efficiency of the troops for their daily rôle for the sake of such isolated occurrences I hold to be a great mistake," etc.

When we come to the pattern of swords, the purely cutting sword has its strenuous advocates, whilst as many more will beseech one to trust to no personal weapon except the pointing sword. Authoritative quotations will be given from well-known leaders advocating one or other form of sword.

It seems to be allowed that a scimitar or tulwar pattern, with its curved blade, is unsuitable for pointing,[2] and also that the best patterns of rapier-pointing sword are difficult to cut with. One may read in Sir Montague Gerard's book how he killed several Afghans. He says:—

[1] *Cavalry in War and Peace*, p. 175.

[2] Though it is said that the Afghans point very effectively by means of an upward prod.

"One had but to make a feint of employing the obsolete cut No. 7, and up would fly their guard over the face, when dropping your point you went clean through your man. . . . The fourth man I tackled fired at me just as I closed, and I felt a blow on my side, but next moment my sword went through something hard, and the weapon was twisted out of my hand and hung by the sword-knot. The blade, which was a straight rapier, one by Wilkinson, got a slight but permanent wave in it, and I can only account for receiving such a wrench by having taken my opponent through the headpiece as he crouched and tried to stab the horse from below."

Pages 255-256: "We counted sixty odd bodies, whilst our casualties amounted to six men and seven horses." And on page 257 he adds: "The lance giving our Sowars a preponderating advantage."[1]

Perhaps of all those who have given their opinion on this subject, that one to whom we would give most credence is a swordsman of the 11th Hussars of Marlborough's time, who fought many duels and lived by his prowess with the sword. His final dictum is: "One point with the smallsword is as deadly as forty cuts with the broadsword."

Verdy du Vernois[2] says: "Experience has proved that a sword-cut seldom, but a point with the sword always, throws a man off his horse. The latter should therefore be chiefly practised at sword drill."

From the bolas of the South American to the tomahawk of the Red Indian or the revolver of the cowboy every weapon has had its advocates.

[1] *Leaves from the Diary of a Soldier and Sportsman*, p. 256.
[2] *Studies in Troop Leading*, p. 196, *note*.

Royal Artillery Mounted Rifles were seen charging on horseback with fixed bayonets[1] a few days after joining a South African column; thus imitating the Australian contingent in the column, who invariably did so—and very formidable they looked.

A conclusion which experience forces upon us, as regards both the armament and tactics of horsemen, is that when they attain a high standard of horsemanship or when they are good horsemen from youth, such as many Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, and Canadians undoubtedly are, a short training will bring them almost level with the regular cavalry and enable them to employ shock tactics. Then they should be armed in addition to their rifle with sword or lance, as the rifle and bayonet are not the best weapons for this purpose. As trained cavalry thus armed they are equal in value to twice if not three times their number of mounted rifles on the battlefield, if they have trained troop, squadron, and regimental leaders in command of them.

The oft-advanced theory that it is not the nature of such and such a race to use the point is quite unfounded. It has been conclusively proved that a recruit who has been allowed only to point with a sword, can hardly be induced to cut, even if a good opportunity offers.

The lance is undoubtedly the "queen of weapons," but it has its drawbacks. But first its great advantage is that it is formidable, and so much so that lancers claim that regiments armed with the sword

[1] For the very good reason that they possessed nothing better for the purpose.

will not face those armed with the lance. It is undoubtedly easier to use against crouching men on foot. The Inniskilling Dragoons after a charge at Zulus, who crouched down under their shields, sent for all available tent-pegging spears.

On the other hand, the lance's shaft is difficult to withdraw from the body of a man, and a lancer may have to leave it there. Then he will draw his sword. But that entails another weapon. In a close mêlée the lance is a clumsy weapon.[1] In the mêlées which occur after a charge, men and horses are so intermingled that even the use of the sword is difficult. But obviously the cure for this is to teach the men to rally instantaneously and not to indulge in mêlées. The officers of the 9th Lancers in the Afghan War had a short spike put into the hilt of their swords, so that a blow from the hilt in the face was decisive.

The weapon which (1) entails least weight and is easiest to carry, and (2) is deadly, and (3) is most likely to be useful on all occasions, is the straight sword or rapier.

But this obviously must be made of the best steel, whereas a quite serviceable cutting sword can be made of inferior iron. That the cutting sword has been so much used is most probably because good steel was difficult to obtain. Napier says to arm cavalry sepoys with heavy English swords of one weight, one length, one shape is a mistake. The cutting sword is not a deadly weapon, often it does not penetrate

[1] The disadvantages of the lance, that it is conspicuous in detached and scouting work and is in the way to some extent on dismounted work, are defects easily got over.

clothes or accoutrements. The mamelukes, formidable antagonists to Napoleon's regular cavalry in Egypt, 1798-1801, carried a cutting sword very considerably curved back, with which weapon they are said to have inflicted terrible wounds; in addition they carried a poniard and two pistols in their sash and another pair of pistols in their holsters. A syce carrying a lance for them followed on foot.

In the Peninsular War, whereas the English cavalry used the sword almost exclusively as a cutting weapon, the French dragoons on the contrary used only the point, which, with their straight sword, nearly always caused a mortal wound. This made the English cavalry say that the French fighting "was not fair."

Some amateurs talk of the revolver as a weapon with which to arm the ranks in place of a sword or lance. They appear to ignore the fact that a bullet once fired off in a mêlée may hit friend or foe. Very fine horsemen, such as Arizona cowboys, who break the insulators of the telegraph wire as they gallop along with a weapon, which they have been accustomed to handle from their youth up, would probably do well in a pursuit with such a weapon, but it is not, we believe, seriously contemplated by any nation as a weapon for use in the ranks. For officers, scouts, farriers, trumpeters, and possibly others it is most useful, as it takes the place of a rifle and is light.

If any particular personal weapon is carried habitually, that weapon should be adopted; but failing that, there must be a long apprenticeship to

lance or sword. Perhaps the point to which most attention should be given is that the man must be taught to have implicit confidence in his weapon; this can be attained best with the lance or with the pointing sword. A man appreciates the fact that with either of these weapons the point goes through easily; whilst with the cutting sword only the most expert can make any impression on, say, a leg of mutton covered with a sack and a leather strap or two.

In the German cavalry, stress is laid on teaching the trooper that the sight of the lance is sure to make the enemy turn and fly. In our own cavalry greater attention is now paid to practising the man in riding at a gallop at a rebounding dummy, offering resistance equal to the weight of a man. Without such practice the men sprain their wrists and lose their grip of the sword, and do not understand how simple it is to run a man through.

The Rifle

Both French and German cavalry have, during the last few years, been repeatedly urged by eminent writers on cavalry to bring themselves to a better knowledge of the use of the rifle and fire tactics. The new weapon issued to the German cavalry has been the signal for some of this literature. Calling to mind that it is but a few short years since German cavalry were armed with an out-of-date carbine, and carried only some twenty rounds of

ammunition, and further reading between the lines of the latest addition to cavalry literature by General von Bernhardi, these exhortations cannot be considered as uncalled for. But to make them a text on which to lecture our regular cavalry only exposes ignorance of their present training, and makes one wonder if one is awaking from far back in the middle of the last century, when a gallant lancer regiment, on being first armed with carbines, gravely piled them on the stable-barrows and wheeled them to the manure-heap. Our British regular cavalry are at least ten, if not fifteen, years ahead of any continental cavalry in rifle shooting, fire discipline, and the knowledge of when and how to resort to fire tactics.

There are probably few of the more senior who have not come to a conclusion formed from experience that the following quotation[1] is as suitable in many respects to cavalry as it is to infantry :—

> Volley firing, and limiting the range against infantry to 500 yards at most, are the surest means of providing against the want of ammunition at the supreme moment. And the sooner it is recognized that long range fire is a special weapon to be used only on special occasions, the better for the efficiency of our infantry in general.

[1] *The Campaign of Fredericksburg*, p. 129.

CHAPTER III

THE HORSE

"A horse! a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

No apology is needed for including in a Treatise on Cavalry a chapter on the subject of the Horse. Were it demanded, it would only be necessary to point to the unfortunate ignorance in regard to horses, horsemanship, and horsemastership which, extending as it does through every gradation of rank of life in the nation, caused our bill for horses in South Africa to total twenty-two millions—that is, about one-tenth of the whole cost of the war. In fact, it may here be remarked that, following this assessment, it is quite probable that the horse question should be rated as 10 per cent in the percentage of importance of matters in preparation for war; that is, in big wars, for our thoughts are apt to be distracted by small wars from the essentials of great wars.

It is unfortunate that nowadays only at most 15 per cent of the men in our cavalry have, before enlistment, had anything to do with horses. Further, few indeed of the officers, though most of them have ridden, and in that best of schools the hunting-field, have gained sufficient experience in

their early life, before joining a regiment, in the stable management and training of horses, to enable them to look after their horses well. This they will only attain to after they have had a fairly long apprenticeship under a good squadron leader.

The essentials of campaigning horse management only come to those who live with horses constantly, and have to get work out of them. Those who hand over their horse to a groom after a long day's work, and who do not see him till they wish to ride again, cannot learn about horses.

That the ordinary hunting man in Great Britain knows very little indeed about economizing his horse's strength is evident from the fact that not one in twenty is ever, after a sharp gallop, seen to dismount, loosen his horse's girth, and turn his head to the wind. Ten to one, if any one does so, it is a soldier, and one who has served in South Africa.

First of all is the question, What is the most suitable animal for cavalry work? And here the mind runs into two lines: (1) There is the animal which will carry a moderately heavy man, whose weight is 11 stone, together with his saddle, arms, etc., which may total up to another 6 stone. For this the beau-ideal is the Irish horse of about 15·2 hands high. But these must be well and carefully fed and watered, and not overdone. Their recuperative power grows less also with every inch of height. (2) The other animal which will carry a lighter cavalryman is seen at its best in the modern type

of polo pony about 15 hands high, and as nearly thoroughbred as possible. These latter are more able to withstand hardship than class (1).

Though the limit to the height of the horse suitable for a campaign should be 15·2 hands, it is more difficult to say how small a horse[1] is suitable to carry a cavalryman. Chest measurement is the best known test for stamina, and a good judge said truly that "a 13·2 hands pony sixty-four inches round, will do double the work of a 14·2 hands pony of equal girth."

Whilst we do not wish for one moment to be understood to advocate unduly small horses for cavalry, we do wish the chest measurement standard to be adopted more widely. We cannot help advancing the theory that the natural height of the horse appears to be not more than 14 to 15 hands at most, and all above that are in the nature of forced exotics, obtained by selection and good food for mares and foals, and in these stamina has not been grown in proportion; take, for instance, the power of the heart, which has to pump blood farther to the extremities in a big horse.

Now, though it must be allowed that a squadron mounted on 15·2 hands horses will, in a charge, easily defeat one mounted on 14·2 hands horses, still the difficulty of maintaining the condition of the squadron mounted on 15·2 hands horses, the increased cost of food, the smaller amount of wear and tear which the

[1] It has been remarked that in Napoleon's army the light cavalry, though they did more work, lost fewer horses than the heavy cavalry. This is attributed to the horses being better bred.

horse, as it increases in height, can bear, are all factors for consideration.

It is because, unfortunately, our ideas in Great Britain are somewhat inflated in respect to the size of the horse required to mount cavalry, that we neglected at the beginning of the Boer War to collect every animal of suitable age, if only 14 hands high, for the remounting of our cavalry in South Africa, and went to other and far more unsuitable sources for our horse-supply. Had we later, as was suggested, commandeered all suitable animals in the Cape Colony, we should have obtained a most useful reserve, and incidentally deprived our opponents of a source of supply of which they took full advantage. The horse and transport animal of the country are always the most suitable for a campaign in that country. By the end of that war, many a cavalry officer had gladly exchanged his 16 hands horse for a Boer or Basuto pony of 14 to 14·2 hands high.

But this, the South African War, it should be here remarked, can only be regarded as giving us a view of one side of a great question. Campaigning in the fertile plains of Europe, where food and water are generally plentiful, where stabling may often shelter the animals, and where enormous distances, with no food beyond that carried in the waggons, are not necessarily covered, the larger horse may do his work well. But he must be treated with the greatest care and the weight carried, in his case, more rigorously reduced than in that of the smaller horse. For shock

tactics he is the best animal on which to mount our cavalry, and our ideal is shock tactics.

But let the squadron leader not forget that, when long distances are to be traversed, a few ponies are perfectly invaluable (they can be driven in a mob with his second line transport and are available to mount men whose horses require a day or two's rest, and which will, if they do not get it, "give in" and never be any more use to them).

In peace time, in the laudable desire for good appearance, these expedients of war are too apt to be forgotten; they only force themselves on us when it is too late. The animals usually described as only fit for mounted infantry are those which see the finish of a campaign, and must be available as reserves of remounts for cavalry.

No doubt it requires experience and trained intelligence to discriminate between the purchase of the large, fat, slow, hairy-heeled, podgy-muscled brute that has never yet gone fast enough to strain himself or be otherwise than perfectly sound, and the lean son of the desert or veldt whose early toil has developed wind-galls, splints, and so on, but whose conformation and muscular development are as complete as will be his ability to live and carry weight, when the other will fall down and die.

Stamina has been mentioned above; it is obviously the first essential in a cavalry horse. Next in rank to it comes good temper, usually accompanied by good digestion and boldness, and marked by a full kind eye and a broad forehead.

Xenophon recommends us to test a horse's courage by unaccustomed sounds and sights before purchasing him as a war horse, and we recommend this practice to cavalry officers.

The Arabs, who have bred horses with a view to war for many generations, have handed down a great deal of old-world wisdom on the subject of the horse suitable for war.[1] The best Arabian horses are undoubtedly the outcome of centuries of breeding to a type, and that the type suitable to carry a light man throughout a long campaign, to face danger courageously, to possess fair speed, immunity from disease and sickness, especially pulmonary complaints, and to bear the jar of galloping on hard ground.

Our own British horses and the Australian Walers have unfortunately been bred for size, speed, and —in the case of the former—ability to carry a man in a burst over a big hunting country, and with, for the last fifty years, a disregard for stamina and temper which has gone far to remove many of them from the type of animal suitable for cavalry.

Situated as we are in regard to knowledge of horses, and hampered as we are in our preparation for war by the difficulty of teaching the essentials of campaigning horse management during peace time, we shall always find that it is in the early part of a war that our cavalrymen will fail to comprehend the necessity for nursing the strength of their horses, for discarding all unnecessary impedimenta, and

[1] Most interesting deductions are to be found in General Daumas's book, *The Horses of the Sahara*, in which conversations with the celebrated Chief Abd-el-Kader are related.

limiting the task to what is absolutely necessary. In peace time, horses which are in regular work are not appreciably affected by their rider sitting on their backs for five or ten minutes at a halt instead of dismounting, or by his not allowing the horse to pick a few mouthfuls of grass twenty or thirty times in the day, or by his not watering him at every chance.

In peace time the horse will get food and water on his return home; but in war these little things in the aggregate matter greatly. They are like the snatches of sleep which a tired man gets when he can; they keep him going. The man can sustain himself by the hope of sleep at a future time. The man has certain traits in his nature which carry him through.

It is said that Murat, in Napoleon's Russian campaign, though he crossed the Niemen with 43,000 horses, could only put 18,000 in the field two months later. Murat had worn them out by keeping them saddled up sixteen hours a day, by giving them insufficient food, and by chasing wisps of Cossacks. *À propos* of this, Nansouty said to Murat: "The horses of the cuirassiers not, unfortunately, being able to sustain themselves on their patriotism, fell down by the roadside and died." Tired men soon express their feelings, the horse is unable to do so. *Verb. sap.*

Intimately connected with this question is the feeding of the horses. We know that no concentrated ration can constitute a substitute for bulk for con-

tinued periods, but it is not generally known how many articles of diet a horse will relish when hungry In the Pamirs the ponies eat the offal of game which is thrown aside, thus recalling the story of our childhood of Black Bess, Dick Turpin's celebrated mare, who had a beefsteak tied round her bit on the ride to York.

Ruskin once said in a lecture to the cadets at Woolwich :

> Whilst all knowledge is often little more than a means of amusement, there is no science which a soldier may not at some time or another find bearing on the business of life and death ; your knowledge of a wholesome herb may involve the feeding of an army, and acquaintance with an obscure point of geography the success of a campaign.

This is applicable to the cavalryman and his horses.

De Brack devotes eight pages of his valuable work, *Cavalry Outpost Duties*, to a chapter on "Forage and Subsistence," every word of which should be known to any cavalry officer who may have to serve in Europe or elsewhere.

The theory of horse management is brought now to a very high standard by our Veterinary Department, and their publication of an excellent book on *Animal Management* marks a step forward which must be appreciated by all who are in agreement with the theory expressed earlier in this chapter, that the horse question is one-tenth in war. It is little different from Frederick the Great's saying that "Victory lies in the legs."

One word of caution is necessary for those who

command cavalry in war. They must metaphorically keep a finger on the equine pulse, and this is, most of all, necessary when working horse artillery in heavy ground, or horses fed on anything less than full rations, or horses in bad weather. Wet saddle-blankets put next a horse's back act like a poultice. There is no alternative in wet weather in a bivouac but to keep the blanket dry, or dry it before a start is made. Further, since the health of their horses is vital to the efficiency of cavalry, their leader must be willing to take risks in grazing, off-saddling, and foraging for food. Against surprise on these occasions long range rifles and our guns now confer on us great advantages.

In this matter of attending to the welfare of the horse, however, it must be fully realized when it is permissible and when the horse must be sacrificed to the exigencies of the situation.

An instructive example of what far-reaching results may come from ill-judged watering of horses is given in the *American Civil War*, by General Alexander. In June 1864 Grant, after his encounter at Cold Harbour with Lee, undertook the bold step of moving south across the James River and attacking the Confederate right flank. For three days, though the movement was reported to Lee, he would not believe it.

On the 15th of June the Federal General Smith, with 1600 men, was moving on Petersburg, a vital point on Lee's right. Beauregard, the Confederate commander, then had only about 2500 men to hold his

extended lines with; he, however, expected reinforcements by night. Every hour's delay of the Federal advance was therefore invaluable. With one cavalry regiment and a battery he delayed Smith's column for three hours, and it was not till 5 P.M. that that General had completed his reconnaissance of Beauregard's position. By 6 P.M. everything was ready for the attack; but it was then found that the Chief of Artillery had sent all the artillery horses to water. This delayed the attack till 7 P.M. It was partially successful, and a portion of the Confederates' lines were captured; but night came on, and with it the Confederates' reinforcements. "Petersburg was lost and won by that hour." That was on the 15th June 1864, and Petersburg did not fall into Federal hands till April 1865.

The question, whether the present day greatly-extended rôle of cavalry on the battle-field, hitherto entirely confined to theory, will answer in practice, is a burning one for the horse-master. Without an enormous force of cavalry will there be squadrons available for these services?

In Frederick the Great's army the horses were a first consideration, and he got the greatest results. In Napoleon's campaigns there is not much evidence of the horses being considered.

Frederick saw that the task suited the horse. Napoleon made the horse suit the task or perish in the attempt. The latter's lost campaigns teach lessons about cavalry which we cavalrymen cannot afford to ignore. Cavalry worn out in the first week of a

campaign, with scores of horses scattered along a line of communication in vain efforts to effect some coup, entail a bitter retribution.

Campaigns of three weeks' duration are not the rule, and every extra exertion for which horses are called upon has its price. It is only in the pursuit that we can afford to disregard our horses.

CHAPTER IV

TACTICS OF CAVALRY *V.* CAVALRY

For the purposes of making this subject plain, the Squadron, the tactical unit, will be first considered.

Let us picture, then, a squadron led at a trot with absolute cohesion (that is, every man's knees close against those of the next man,[1] but not so as to prevent the pace being increased to such a gallop as is compatible with that of the slower horses in the squadron). This squadron being led till they are within 50 to 100 yards of their opponents, and then at a command breaking into the full pace of the charge with a crashing, ear-splitting yell rather than a cheer, will, it is universally allowed, go through, break up, and cause to turn an opposing squadron which has any intervals in its ranks.[2] In the latter, men and horses can, since there is room, turn or pull round; and they will do so. Your men and horses cannot turn; there is no room. Weapons in this case may be ignored, the

[1] Von Schmidt, p. 72. But by cohesion is not meant that the men are to be jammed together, for this only produces disorder, men being forced out of their places, the number of ranks increased.

[2] The reader who desires full information, examples, and proof of this well-ascertained fact should consult Colonel Ardant du Picq's book, one of the most interesting military works ever written and one constantly referred to by French writers on cavalry.

horses' weight and momentum is the weapon. Horse and man total upwards of a thousand pounds in weight, they represent 9 feet in height by 3 feet in width. The front extends for, say, 70 or 80 yards. The pace is 10 yards per second. It is a rushing wall, there is nowhere any gap.

The opposing squadron has started out with equally gallant intentions, but before they reached the charging point, or even later, something has occurred to prevent them appearing like a wall; more often than not their direction has been changed, and, whilst shouldering, these on the hand turned to may be closed up well enough, but those on the outer flank have not had time to gain the direction; pace may not have been uniform; a direction may not have been given by the leader; or his order may have been mistaken. No matter what it is: fifty things may happen. It is just enough to prevent that squadron being the more compact, well-built wall of the two. And what follows? They are defeated and disgraced. They will not, as a squadron, again face the cavalry of the enemy whose squadron defeated them. Better, far better draft the squadron and send the leader to another arm or work if, unfortunately, he has survived. Why be so severe? Why treat them thus? Because the heart, the *moral* of the defeated squadron has lost two-thirds, whilst the winning squadron is elated, believes in itself and its leader, and despises the enemy. It will charge three squadrons next time and will not turn. Still keeping before us the idea

of a wall moving at speed, let us consider what better fortune it may have; it may catch the enemy on a half flank, or full in flank.

Place a row of books standing quite an inch or two apart from each other, hurl a spare book at the end book, and see what happens. At least four or five will fall down. "Ten men on the flanks and rear (of the enemy) do more than one hundred riding in front."

Trusting that this idea of a knee-to-knee charge, the cardinal point, has been made clear, let us consider the other matters which a squadron leader should keep before him when opposed to cavalry. He must utilize surprise, what Galliffet refers to as "the horrible and unexpected"; he should always be "the first to attack, always take the initiative, and charge resolutely." Again, our leader must utilize the ground: first, its hollows and ridges must be accommodated to his tactics; secondly, he should try to give the enemy bad ground, ground which will tire or disintegrate them whilst he himself uses the best, since a ditch, narrow drain, or small nullah diagonal to his front, a fallen tree, a patch of boggy land, a few rabbit holes, some thorns or rocks may mean two or three men and horses down or out of place.

It is certain that an enemy who sees your squadron disappear in a hollow, as you advance towards him, will, nine times out of ten, expect it to continue its direction towards him; here, then, a wheel to the flank, a gallop of a hundred yards or so, followed by a change of direction, and later a

wheel into line, may give the opportunity of a lifetime.

These may appear small things, but they must be second nature to a cavalry leader as they are to some, and those the most dangerous, wild animals; for in the skilled utilization of these small things lies his honour and hopes of success.

Watch the cat tribe: deliberate preparations, every advantage taken of cover in the stealthy advance, then the gathering of the limbs under—for the rush. From a fighting point of view we want every instinct of this kind; with the cavalry there is no place for "Gentlemen of the Guard, fire first" —cunning, nerve, unflinching resolution, reckless, bloody-minded intrepidity, and with all this the power to inspire your command, even those of doubtful courage, with the certainty of success; though they must know some cannot come back, still they like to be deceived, to die, or to be maimed, fierce, high-hearted, happy, and elated. The sight of the enemy's backs makes them all brave.

> And then we re-formed and went at them once more,
> And ere they had rightly closed up the old track,
> We broke through the lane we had opened before,
> And as we went forward e'en so we came back.
>
> LINDSAY GORDON.

THE RALLY

An endeavour has been made, then, to show that the success of the charge lies: first, in the ordered momentum of the unit; second, in the suitable appli-

cation of this by the leader. Disciplined experience turns the scale. First, the impact, lessened in degree as one side turns sooner or later. Then the mêlée. These beaten back, the others victorious; these looking for safety, the others for victims. Now, at this moment the wild man's first instinct is to pursue "all out," without a reserve, to kill, perhaps, a weaker instinct, to capture, or to plunder. A new element of disorder follows on this mad desire to cast prudence to the winds and pursue, *l'épée dans les reins.*

Once more the governing mind of the leader must assert itself, his foresight and knowledge must reign supreme and repress the natural instinct of the many; he by voice and example must rally his squadron. Failing this, or a portion of his squadron held in reserve, his horsemen are a prey to the first formed body which attacks them, though of inferior strength.[1] "That side which is able to throw in the last-formed body will win." So excited is his command and so irregular their course of action, that he will have great difficulty in getting them to obey him. *Cavalry Training*, p. 128, realizes this:

As the pursuers will be in disorder and consequently at the mercy of any fresh body of the enemy's cavalry,

[1] Von Schmidt's *Instructions for Cavalry*, p. 159. The great Frederick attached the greatest importance to the rapid rallying of squadrons from the most complete confusion. "It must be impressed upon the Hussar that he must be most attentive to the sound 'Appell,' on hearing which each man will join his squadron and rank with the utmost rapidity possible," etc. And again: *N.B.*—"His Majesty will most particularly observe that the squadrons learn to rally rapidly." And also p. 77: "An acknowledged authority on our army says: 'That cavalry remains master of the field and gains the victory which can most quickly rally and reform.'"

the necessity of organizing a support without delay is imperative.

Here let us remember that we have glorious traditions. The name of Cromwell inspires very diverse thoughts in the British Isles. To the Irish, battered walls ; to the Scots, ruthless discipline ; to the English, a constitution upheld or a monarchy overturned. Suitable memories of our great cavalry leader.[1] To the cavalryman what does this man, who can still inspire such diverse thoughts in nations, represent ?

The highest attribute in a general is that he should be able to order the elements of disorder. War is the acme of disorder. The instant conversion of the available remnants out of disorder, chaos, a hundred wishes, shouts and orders, broken legs, loose horses, dead or wounded, men fierce and reckless, constitutes the triumph of discipline and the guiding foreseeing mind.

In minutes, perhaps seconds, the enemy's support or reserve, taking advantage in turn of our disorder, will be upon us ; we who have ceased to be a wall, and are now scattered masonry, must be built up, so as at any rate to *look* formidable and to make those of the enemy, who as individuals still bravely dispute the ground, turn and fly, and perhaps throw into disorder

[1] *Cromwell*, by Captain P. A. Charrier, p. 11 : "After Rupert's defeat Cromwell rallied and re-formed ready for the next job at hand. The pursuit of Rupert's troopers was entrusted to the smallest fraction sufficient to do the work efficiently. . . . After each attack he re-forms quickly and in good order ready for the next effort . . . attacks the royal infantry. . . . Towards the end of the battle he is rallied and ready to meet yet another effort ; ready to meet Lucas and Goring's squadrons."

the ranks of those who are coming to their support. More than this, we must move in the direction of the enemy, as though we still wished to fight. As wind is caught, stunned men regain their senses, disabled horses exchanged for sound ones captured at hazard, broken weapons replaced, the ranks refill, order at last prevails.

We have laid stress on the rally of the squadron,[1] but hardly less important is the maxim that the victory rests with those who can last throw a formed body into the combat. This may be the support of which De Brack says :[2]

> Almost all the failures of charges are due to the slowness or ignorance of the supports. A charge badly supported, no matter how bravely begun, becomes only a bloody affray, whilst one well supported is always victorious and decisive.

Let us, then, for our guidance, and before considering larger forces, formed of many squadrons and supplied with another element of offence in their horse artillery, consider what conclusions are arrived at from the fight of squadron *v.* squadron. They appear to be :—

1. Provided that there is space to manœuvre and fight,

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[1] "The rally after an action, mounted or dismounted, and against an enemy mounted or dismounted, requires careful thinking out and constant practice. During peace training, operations are rarely worked out to a logical conclusion, and too often cease with a final charge ; so that the problem is not faced of what is to happen *after* the enemy has been routed, or the position captured or galloped through, or what is to happen should the attack fail."—General Sir D. Haig's *Report on the Cavalry Divisional Training*, 1909, p. 14.

[2] De Brack, Chapter on Charges, p. 252.

that cavalry which can manœuvre with cohesion at the greatest pace will win.

2. The element of surprise affects the result.

3. The utilization of terrain is a *sine qua non.*

4. A flank attack is the object to be aimed at.

5. On the quickness with which the rally is carried out much depends.

6. A skilled direction of the support influences the action.

CHAPTER V

CAVALRY *V.* CAVALRY

Forming to the Flank

"When you charge make a change of front and attack them in flank. This manœuvre can always be successfully practised against an enemy like the English, who make a vigorous and disunited charge, whose horses are not very manageable, and whose men, brave but uninstructed, begin their charge too far away from the enemy."—De Brack.

"Ten men on the flank do more than 100 in front."—Von Schmidt (p. 90).

I. The Squadron

1. In the mounted attack of cavalry on cavalry that side will win which makes use of a wall of mounted men, advancing knee to knee with no intervals showing. Two means of quickly forming and launching this wall are as follows: 1st. The head of the squadron column is directed towards the enemy, and line is formed to the front. 2nd. The head is led obliquely to the enemy's advance, and at such a distance as will enable the troops to wheel into line, get up pace, and attack.

2. *Forming to the Front or to the Flank.*—The first plan is that which the beginner almost invariably adopts; the enemy's squadron has a fatal attraction for him; he distrusts himself and imagines

that there is not time to manœuvre. This attack generally "leads to undecided cavalry duels."

The second plan is that which is always advocated, as, though it demands more *sang-froid*, practice, and experience on the part of the squadron leader. Its advantages are considerable; they are as follows: (*a*) It gives more space and consequently more time to the leader. (*b*) The enemy's squadron, if already formed, will usually shoulder towards the attacker, and thus become disintegrated. (*c*) The movement does not entail the disorder consequent on front forming; on the contrary, a wheel into line generally ensures well-ordered and cohesive ranks. (*d*) The squadron is usually successful in striking the flank of the enemy.

Von Schmidt says:

> An attack direct to the front must be an exceptional thing; to advance and at the same time gain ground to a flank must be the rule.

General Sir D. Haig says:

> The efficacy of flank attack is so universally admitted as to need no argument to support it. A more difficult question is—how should we protect our own flanks from attack?

3. *Defensive and Offensive Flanks.*—Usually the best protection is afforded by either a defensive or an offensive flank; that is, a portion of the unit, say, a troop from a squadron, a squadron from a regiment, should drop back or be ready to drop back in echelon; or, on the other hand, should be thrown forward. The duty of the defensive flank is to act against an

enemy overlapping or taking in flank the unit in front. The object of the offensive flank is to threaten even more completely than with the remaining force the flank of the enemy, who will be tempted to edge across to meet it.

What is true for a squadron is true for a regiment, and is still more true for a brigade, because with this comes in the question of artillery fire.

II. The Regiment

4. Let us then picture a regiment moving in "mass" from the south to the north of the paper, map, or ground.

Our regimental commander seeing the enemy's mass in front and bearing down on him, say, eight hundred yards away, gives the command, "Left shoulders," and moves N.E. The first effect is that the enemy have a moving mark to hit, and to do so must "shoulder" or change direction; while at the same time they are deploying to the front.

Both forces move three hundred yards. Then our regimental commander gives the command, "Echelon attack to the Left." The squadron nearest to the enemy wheels into line and attacks; the remaining squadrons continue their direction and wheel into line in succession and attack as required.

The attack eventuates somewhat as in the diagram.

5. *Advantages of the Echelon Attack.*—This form of attack has the following advantages: (*a*) The wheel into line, the least discomposing of evolutions,

takes but a few seconds to carry out, and then there is presented a formed body to charge the enemy.

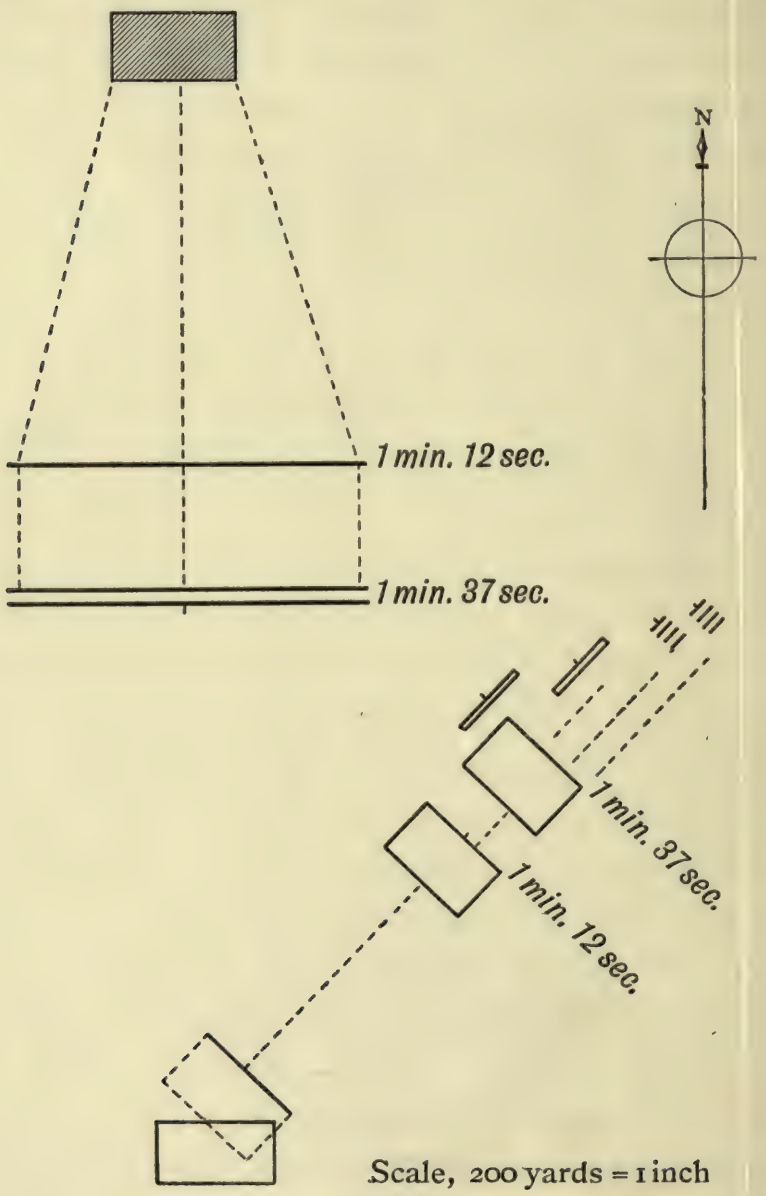

DIAGRAM I.

(*b*) A succession of formed bodies coming up on the unprotected flank give confidence to the squadron, which feels it is supported by other lines near enough

to catch any outflanking enemy. (*c*) An echelon of squadrons, seen from the enemy's point of view at a distance of three hundred yards, is practically indistinguishable from line. It is, moreover, easier than in forming to the front to abolish all intervals between squadrons; a point of the greatest importance in an attack. (*d*) To be the last to form the attack from a compact formation is a considerable advantage. (*e*) The leader may even be able to change the direction of his mass so as to attack from due east to west.

III. The Brigade

6. *Training of Leaders.*—Our present squadron leaders, our future brigade and divisional leaders, must be brought up to regard this forming to the flank as the only plan, as second nature; they must believe that if they act otherwise they are voluntarily tying one hand behind their back. Otherwise the maintenance of horse artillery with a view to co-operation with cavalry is almost useless.

7. *Co-operation of R.H.A.*—In the cavalry fight horse artillery is the only factor which has assumed totally different proportions in the last ten years (*i.e.* since Q.F. guns were introduced) to those which formerly obtained. Von Schmidt, p. 163, writing in the middle of last century, says:

> The co-operation of horse artillery with the shock of the cavalry must be a very exceptional occurrence, as when the circumstances of the ground are very favourable, allowing it to act and at the same time protecting it.

Nor does it appear that any instance of ideal co-operation between the two arms occurred in the War of 1870. With the old guns the help which horse artillery could give was not great; and consequently co-operation was not practised in peace nor attempted in war.

Strange as it may appear, our cavalry officers still find it hard not to deserve the reproach cast upon them by the Duke of Wellington, who, writing after the battle of Salamanca, remarks: "The trick our officers of cavalry have acquired of galloping *at* everything; they never think of manœuvring before an enemy."

8. *The Two Forms of Attack.*—A brigade of cavalry which moves in mass with its guns alongside it and attacks straight to its front, masking its guns by means of its squadrons' extensions, voluntarily throws away at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of its power, *i.e.* its guns. It will be beaten every time by the brigade which sends its guns to one of the flanks and goes to the other itself. By this last method both gun fire and charging power are fully applied. Further, it is probable the guns will be able to enfilade the enemy's lines before they attack. A very short experience of fighting a cavalry brigade shows this conclusively, and both sides will learn to drop their guns' trails at a favourable opportunity and move their squadrons away from them or, *vice versa*, the guns moving from the squadrons. The latter may be an excellent plan, and it certainly entails less wear and tear on the squadrons. Directly the guns come into action the horses can rest.

The choice between the two will usually be dictated by the ground; and in most cases there will be a combination of the two. Thus a brigade is

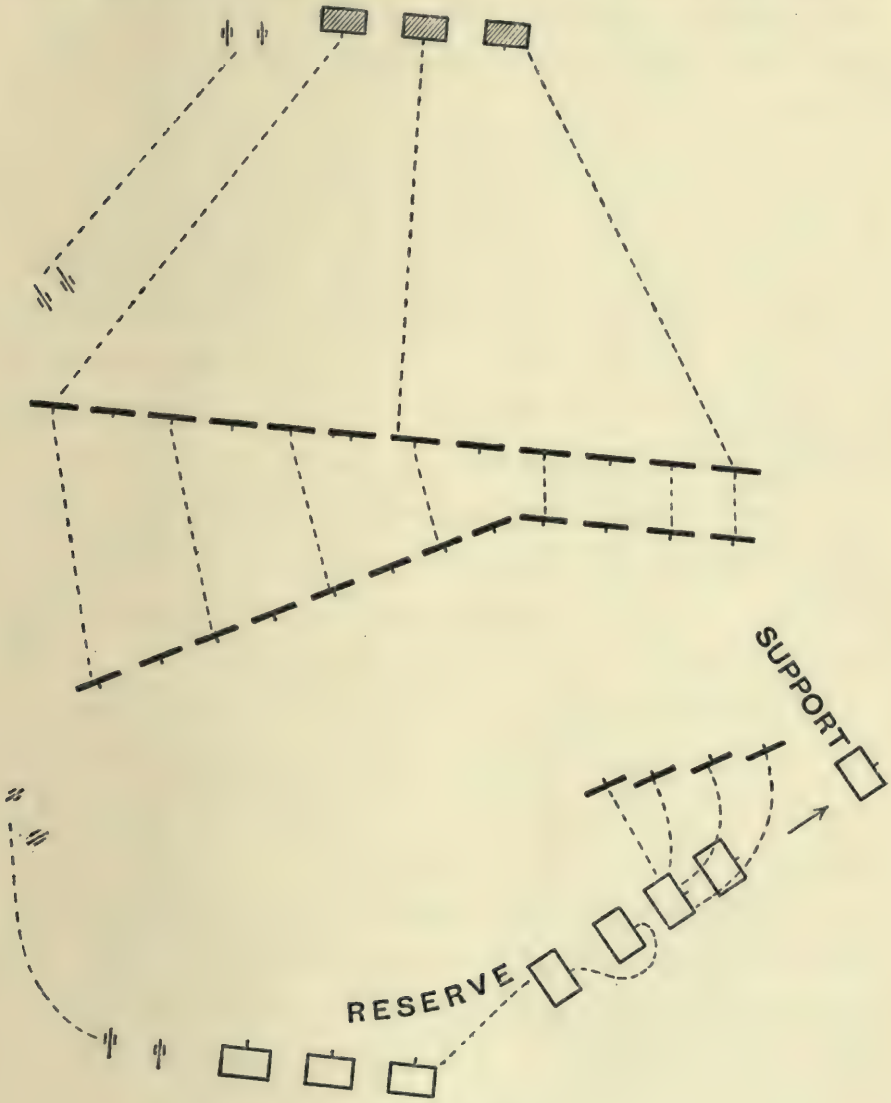

Diagram II.

advancing towards a crest, the brigadier ahead. He sends his guns away to the high ground on one flank, and his squadrons over or round the ridge and down to the level ground on the other.

9. *When both Forces get away from their Guns.*—Both sides will usually drop the trails on the same, say, the west side, and move eastwards, opposite to each other, to attack. If working along a ridge, both sides will usually keep their guns on the higher ground.

Other things being equal, the squadrons which move farthest, fastest, and in the best order will have an advantage—(1) because they will put the enemy's squadrons between themselves and the enemy's gun fire; (2) because they will compel the enemy's squadrons to form so that they are fired on by artillery and very probably enfiladed.

It becomes obvious, then, that if these tactics are adopted, and the squadrons of both sides act in exactly the same way, they will meet on perfectly level terms.

10. *Formations for moving to a Flank.*—The point then to aim at is to bring some deciding factor in the attack. In what formation is it best to move the squadrons away to the flank?

11. *Column of Regimental Masses compared with Column of Squadrons.*—Let us compare column of regimental mass with column of squadrons, and let the pace be a trot. Allow thirty seconds for the shoulder of a regimental mass, five seconds for the wheel of troops. At the end of four minutes the head of the mass will have gone 820 yards; the head of the column 920 yards. But if there are twelve squadrons, with a front of 64 yards, nine intervals of 8 yards, and two of 16 yards, the last squadron will

have only gone 50 yards; while in the mass the rear squadron will have gone 630 yards. It follows,

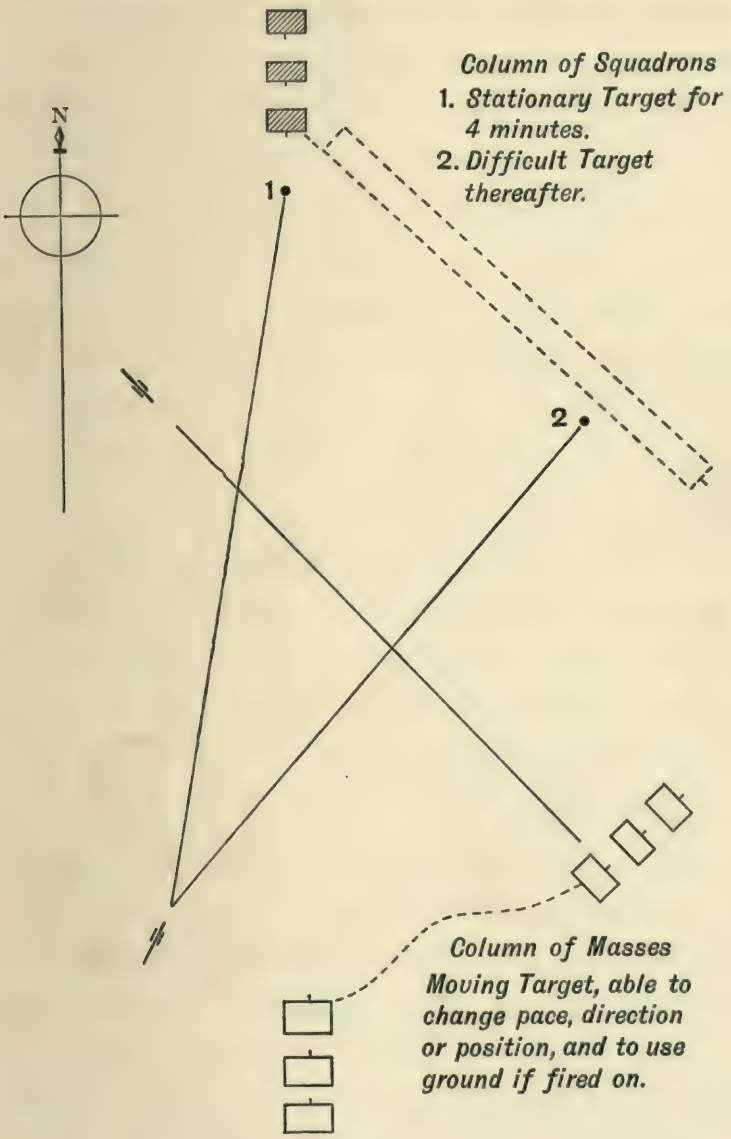

Diagram III.

then, that the leader who adopted column of regimental masses practically has all his squadrons within reach of his voice, and they have moved well away from his guns.

12. *Relative Effect of Artillery Fire on the two Formations.*—The relative effect of the guns on the two columns may be compared. For four minutes the column of squadrons affords, before it gets on the move, a stationary though every moment decreasing mark. After that the target might be taken where the column has to pass some tree or house, and each squadron saluted in succession as it reaches this place. Otherwise it is not a very easy mark, and certainly not such a large mark as column of regimental masses, but the latter moves at once, is easily hidden, and can more easily change pace and direction.

13. *Column of Masses preferred.*—On the whole, the column of squadrons formation compares unfavourably with the mass formation, not only as a means of moving rapidly to a flank, but also for facility of evolution when arrived there.

14. *The Formation for the Attack.*—If, then, we take mass as the best formation, in what mode shall we move our mass, and evolve our lines of attack from it?

We will compare two methods. One, ours, being the echelon attack from mass to a flank, and the other, the enemy's, being an attack to the right from quarter column. Ours only involves sufficient distance being taken between regimental masses, and we are ready to attack at once. Theirs involves the formation of lines of squadron columns and then lines, and must commence at such a distance from the enemy as to allow for the time and space used up in these two formations. For our echelon attack little

or no ground is consumed in the direction of the enemy; and this means late formation. Consequently our mass can go on moving away from the guns for a longer period.

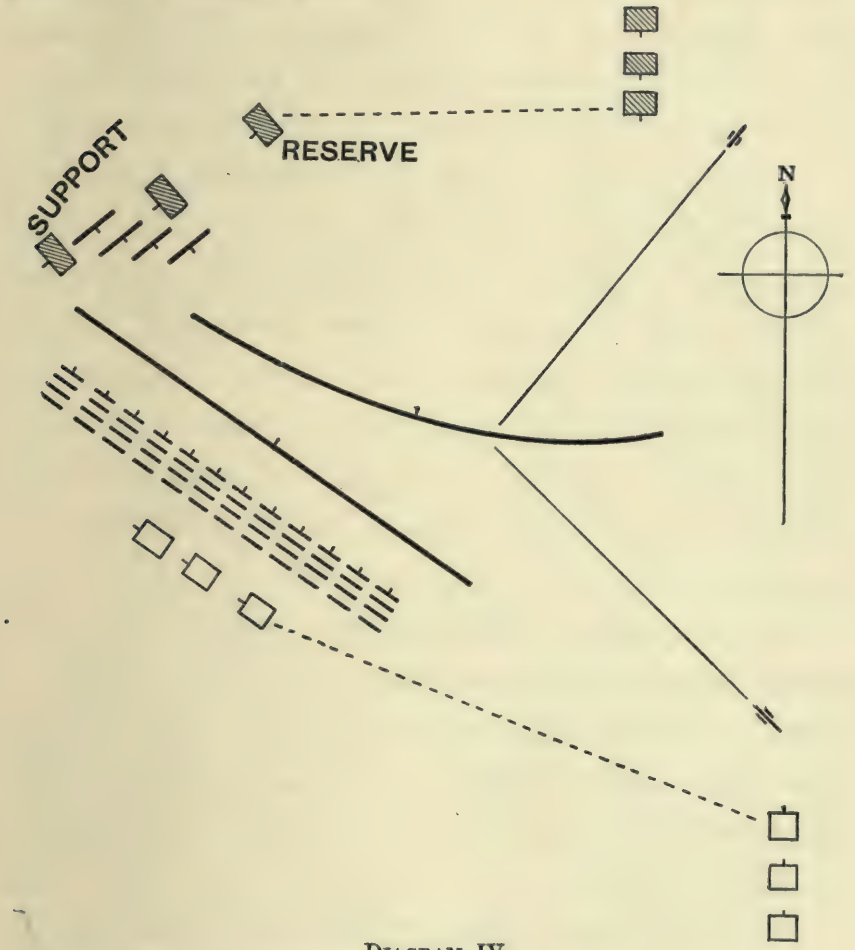

Diagram IV.

Another great point, directly we see him begin to open to squadron column we can give one more change to our direction, and so gain his flank. He will either be taken at an angle, or have to shoulder his line of squadron columns. Thus we have gained the outside; he must mask his own guns, and must be taken in flank by ours.

15. *Time for Horse Artillery to unlimber.*—It would appear as though the leader who first dropped his guns' trails would be likely to win; but there is a saving clause to this. If the other side see the trails dropped in an obviously good position, they will avoid the combat there, or perhaps leave a section or portion of their horse artillery to deal with these guns, and take the remainder with them to the flank. They will avoid the cavalry combat till they are well away from the enemy's guns, and will then fight, when they have guns and cavalry, against cavalry alone. This shows that in the cavalry combat it is a very difficult matter to know just when to drop the trails, and get away to a flank and attack. It must come as an inspiration, something like Wellington's move at Salamanca.

16. *Form of Attack must be simple.*—To have to decide between a great many complicated forms of attack is out of the question. The form of attack must be simple, understood by all, and only the timing of it can be left to the leader at the supreme moment.

17. *Conclusions.*—Our conclusions, then, are:

1st. That it is always advisable to move diagonally to an attack coming at us, even with a squadron or regiment.

2nd. That when we have to consider the combination of horse artillery and cavalry squadrons in attack, it is still more necessary.

3rd. That the mode in which we move to a flank prior to throwing in our squadrons must be carefully

considered, and the plan adopted which gives us most squadrons at the critical point, and the handiest and simplest mode of evolution.

4th. That intervals between squadrons are a positive evil in an attacking line.

5th. That in an echelon the supporting body must be near enough to give confidence to the body in front, far enough to catch the enemy on the turn.

6th. That no squadron must form line till it sees an enemy before it to charge. Therefore, if, as the echelon opens out, the squadron leader sees that he will be beyond the flank, he should not form to the flank, but should lead round in squadron column and look for his opportunity.

"Why is it," asks Ardant du Picq, "so hard to use cavalry well?" and replies: "Because the rôle is all movement, all *moral*; *moral* and movement so closely allied, that often the movement alone without a charge, without physical action of any sort, makes an enemy retreat, and if that is followed up, causes his total rout. The latter follows from the rapidity of cavalry for those who know how to use it."

CHAPTER VI

FIRE ACTION IN TACTICS OF CAVALRY *V.* CAVALRY

A VERY frequent question, also quite a justifiable one and one which cavalry soldiers must not shirk, but must on the other hand thoroughly understand and thresh out in their own minds, both by practical experiment and theoretical discussion,[1] is the following:—

Since cavalry are armed with an excellent magazine rifle, may they not more easily and effectually inflict loss and defeat on the enemy's cavalry by that means rather than by employing shock action, with its gambling uncertainty, its losses in men and horses, its need of intense resolution or complete absence of *arrière pensée* on the part of the leader?

Those cavalry soldiers who have had experience in such affairs, who have thought the matter out and

[1] Acrimonious discussion with officers of other branches of the service as to their relative powers is to be deprecated as not conducive to "the unison of arms." Good cavalry will beat bad infantry, and *vice versa*. An officer of artillery or infantry should believe that he and his men cannot be ridden over so long as they keep steady and in good heart, whilst a cavalry officer should, on the contrary, believe that he and his men can ride over anything. These two propositions, speaking in a logical sense, it is impossible to bring into agreement. Officers on the staff and general officers have by their training risen superior to the petty jealousies between the various arms; but experience shows that this can never be the case throughout the army.

thus obtained certain guiding principles, will reply: "There are certainly many occasions when the conditions of terrain or the nature of the combat favour such action. We have only to mention a rearguard or a running fight and many instances come to mind at once in the case of those pursued."

Intricate ground always favours fire action, and in small affairs, as a sequel to a dash at the flank of an enemy holding a position on a rough and unrideable kopje, it is obviously the right course.

Of all these occasions it is our intention to take full advantage; never to miss an opportunity. At the same time, practical experience has convinced us that we must guard against such action being adopted to the prejudice of shock action in cases where the latter is of supreme value, and we must also recognize the "inherent weakness of mounted troops who attempt to force a decision with fire action without combining it with shock action."

In the *Report on the Cavalry Division Training*, 1909, by General Sir D. Haig, we find the following :—

> The principles which should determine the choice between mounted and dismounted action require to be more thoroughly considered. Small units have been seen on several occasions to dismount on open ground when mounted action was the only sound course to adopt. On the other hand, squadrons have been seen to remain mounted in enclosed country when under fire at close range of dismounted men.

Further, we feel that the very fact that there are many more occasions suitable for fire action than for

shock action must not make us lose sight of this, namely, that though we may use fire action when we meet the enemy nine times out of ten, it is on the tenth occasion, and then because shock action takes place, that something definite, something which affects the result of the campaign, is seen to happen. Therefore we must not let our future leaders be brought up with distorted views. We have to recognize that whilst recourse to shock action demands great resolution, fire action on each successive occasion at an increased distance is always the easy course; whilst the former decides battles and increases our *moral*, the latter is a sign in many cases of the leader weakening, temporizing, or waiting for orders which will never—and *he knows it*—come.[1]

We desire to face this question squarely, and with a just appreciation of human nature and its many weaknesses and failings. Nor do we forget the Arab proverb that victory is gained not so much by the numbers killed as by the numbers frightened. It is in view of this that we adopt certain lines in our cavalry training.

It appears desirable to give an instance of a case where shock action is decisive. Imagine two brigades of cavalry each with their H.A. Battery meeting on an open plain. Each wishes to get forward. One, Red, determining to use rifle action only, adopts

[1] *Cavalry in Future Wars*, Von Bernardi, page 115: "It is never permissible to wait until driven into action by superior commands, but one must always endeavour to reap, on one's own initiative, the utmost possibilities the situation holds out."

the best formation he can think of, a double echelon formation with his guns either on the flanks well drawn back or in the centre. Dismounting, he prepares to attack. Blue, leaving a fraction of his force in guns and rifles to hold Red to his ground (and cavalry will credit how difficult it is for Red to break off from such an attack), moves round Red's flank, out of easy range and at speed, and with the remainder of his brigade attacks Red's flank, choosing the angle at which he will "go in."

Red has of his own accord rendered his mobile force to a great extent immobile; he suffers accordingly. Blue, using gun fire just in advance of his shock action, rolls Red up.

It is the fact, that the leaders of both sides instinctively feel that they should not immobilize their commands, which will lead to "mounted combats of cavalry forces." Scores of actual happenings have convinced those who have been present at them that there is nothing harder to hit than a galloping man and horse; further, that if the mark is men and horses approaching, the fire will be still less effectual. Whether the men firing are under shell fire and their own horses are near them, whether the enemy are armed with a personal weapon, especially a lance or long rapier, each of these factors reduces the number of hits in a way which can only have been seen to be believed.

In the case of Red, their own and the enemy's movements are disconcerting and inimical to accuracy of fire. In the case of Blue, movement every

moment is conferring increased advantages on him, and not the least of these liberty of action.

Red, since he must send his horses to some distance back, takes a long time to mount and move; and would give opportunities to Blue during his movement.[1]

As regards the difficulty of hitting a galloping horseman, the following incident in South Africa may be of interest. An officer and four good shots, with their horses close at hand, remained to observe after the squadron had been withdrawn from a debatable kopje. Occasionally they took long shots at the Boers, who in twos and threes rode strung out across the front, almost out of range. Without any warning, suddenly about seventy Boers turned and galloped straight at the kopje. "Fire steadily till I tell you to mount," was the order given by the officer, who then fired at a man in the centre on a white horse and well in advance. No Boers were

[1] Langlois, *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*, p. 97: "Let us consider them (mounted infantry) next in the fight. They attack like infantry and leave their horses some way behind them. How easily could these groups of horses, held by a few men, be scattered by some squadrons of cavalry. But the squadrons, it is said, will be checked by the fire of dismounted men. To begin with, this will mean so many less carbines in the firing line. But can these moderate or at most ordinary shots—for they are not Boers—stop a resolute charge? Will it not be sufficient in any case to dismount a few men with carbines and so contain the few dismounted men who have to defend these herds of horses? And if needs be, would not fire alone be good enough to disperse the troops of riderless animals and reduce the men who are fighting some way off on foot to infantry without valises, without food, and soon even without cartridges?" And on page 98: "Does this mean that cavalry are never to use their carbines? No one has, I believe, and no one ever will, uphold such a theory. Improvements in firearms have rendered this particular weapon more and more useful, one may even say indispensable. Its employment has become more frequent and more justified in every phase of the engagement."

seen to fall, and with 100 yards start the five raced back to their squadron. When they came to compare notes, it was found that all had fired at the same man on a white horse, at whom some forty rounds had been discharged. The conclusion arrived at was that rifle fire is not effective against galloping individual horsemen, a conclusion which was duly acted upon.

Cavalry must have space to manœuvre and fight. Without these, cavalry lose the advantages conferred on them by mobility, and become at a disadvantage compared with infantry.

That there are very diverse opinions on the power of rifle fire against cavalry must be evident from the fact that instructions so very different in their import as the following were issued in Mounted Troops' Manuals shortly after the war in South Africa :—

"This Memorandum is not meant for cavalry who turn their backs, but for those who, when they see the enemy preparing to charge with sabre and lance, will coolly dismount, form up, and when he gets within reach, pour in such a withering fire as will in five minutes kill as many of the enemy as the same enemy with sword and lance would kill in five hours on active service."—Preface to Lord Dundonald's *Cavalry Training*, Canada, 1904.

"If an attack of cavalry is imminent, mounted troops should, if time admits, gallop to cover or enclosed or broken ground and there repel and retaliate."—General Hutton's *Mounted Service Manual, Australian Commonwealth.*

The method is illustrated on an opposite page and shows the formation of square, horses inside. This

formation offers a splendid target to H.A. or machine gun fire for preparation of the attack which would undoubtedly be made by cavalry from a direction at right angles to that fire.

Colonel Henderson, in *Science of War*, page 160, sums up the situation as follows :—

> It is beyond question that dealing with a dismounted force, whatever may be the amount of fire with which it is endowed, shock tactics may play an important part.
>
> The opportunities of effective outflanking and surprise may possibly be few; but the very fact that the enemy has both the power and the will to seek out such opportunities and to charge home is bound to hamper the movements and to affect the *moral* of any force of horsemen which depends on fire alone.
>
> Such a force, even if it could hold on to its position, would be unable, except under favourable conditions of ground, to make any forward progress, for directly it mounted it would be at the mercy of its antagonist,[1] and it would thus be absolutely prevented from bursting through the hostile cavalry and from acquiring the information which it is its main object to obtain.
>
> In the valley of the Shenandoah in 1864 the Confederate squadrons were armed only with rifles, while the Federals under Sheridan were trained both to fire and charge. The result is significant. The southerners, though admirable horsemen, were worsted at every turn, and their commander had at last to report that his mounted infantry were absolutely useless against the Union cavalry.

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[1] In Germany it is held that mounted infantry cannot hold the field against a highly trained cavalry, for sooner or later they would be caught when in the saddle, and then before they had time to dismount and fire it would be all over with them (Elliot, p. 31).

Dismounted Action of Cavalry

Objection is often raised to cavalry practising the rôle of the infantry attack, and generally with reason, for, where there is any other better plan for cavalry, it is obviously wrong for them to dismount, leave their horses far behind, and immobilize themselves in order to carry out this form of attack. But on the other hand, and especially in rearguard affairs, it is quite possible that a weak rearguard or detached force well posted in a gorge or other unturnable position will hold out till such an attack is made. Then take plenty of cartridges, carry your swords with you,[1] and "go in." But do not imagine that this costly mode of attack should be adopted on all occasions.

It may be taken as a general rule that full value is not obtained from cavalry who are far distant or long separated from their horses. In the latest German cavalry regulations there is an important modification. It is laid down that the decisive dismounted action should only be attempted when the leader is convinced of possessing numerical superiority, and very rarely over ground giving the enemy a prepared field of fire. It is fatal, they say, to commit your forces with numbers insufficient for success. They further say (para. 452): "Half-hearted dismounted action contains the germs of failure"; and evidently disapprove of the view that

[1] The sword in its scabbard may be put through the shoulder cord, and so down the back and through the belt.

the extent of the rôle of cavalry dismounted should be delimitated, as there is a tendency to do in our army by those who expect the cavalryman to protest if they ask him to dismount, and to argue how far he should go in attack—whereas he must be, and will be, ready to accept any rôle which aids victory.

Prince Kraft's contribution to the discussion which followed the war of 1870-71 should be regarded, by the British army at any rate, as out of date. He wrote: "A blow is given to the true spirit of cavalry if a trooper once believes that he can fight without his horse." This blow, duly received by the British cavalry, has proved innocuous; they have learnt to *reculer pour mieux sauter*, with an additional power, in the form of the rifle, of the greatest value to them, whilst at the same time they will retain the tradition that their

IDEAL IS SHOCK ACTION.

CHAPTER VII

A CAVALRY BRIGADE IN ACTION

In a cavalry attack the first objects are:—

1. To give the guns a good field of fire against the enemy's attacking squadrons for as long as possible. This thought comes first, and the first order is accordingly that which puts the horse artillery in motion.

2. To keep our attacking squadrons from view of the enemy till the last moment.[1]

3. To make the line of direction of the cavalry attack such that it and the line of the artillery fire meet approximately at right angles on the mass of the enemy's squadrons advancing to the attack, as already explained in the chapter on flank attack.

In order to attain a good field of fire for the guns it is often worth while to send two squadrons (not necessarily from the same regiment) to work towards the enemy *en bondes*, as the French expression is. For example (see Diagram V.), "A" squadron Carbineers pushes on half a mile or so (never more than a mile) and gets into any likely artillery position.

[1] A lesson taught us by our South African experiences, of which there is a danger of our losing sight, is the possible result of bringing large bodies of troops in close formation under the effective fire of modern guns and rifles.

"B" squadron Dragoons pushes on past their

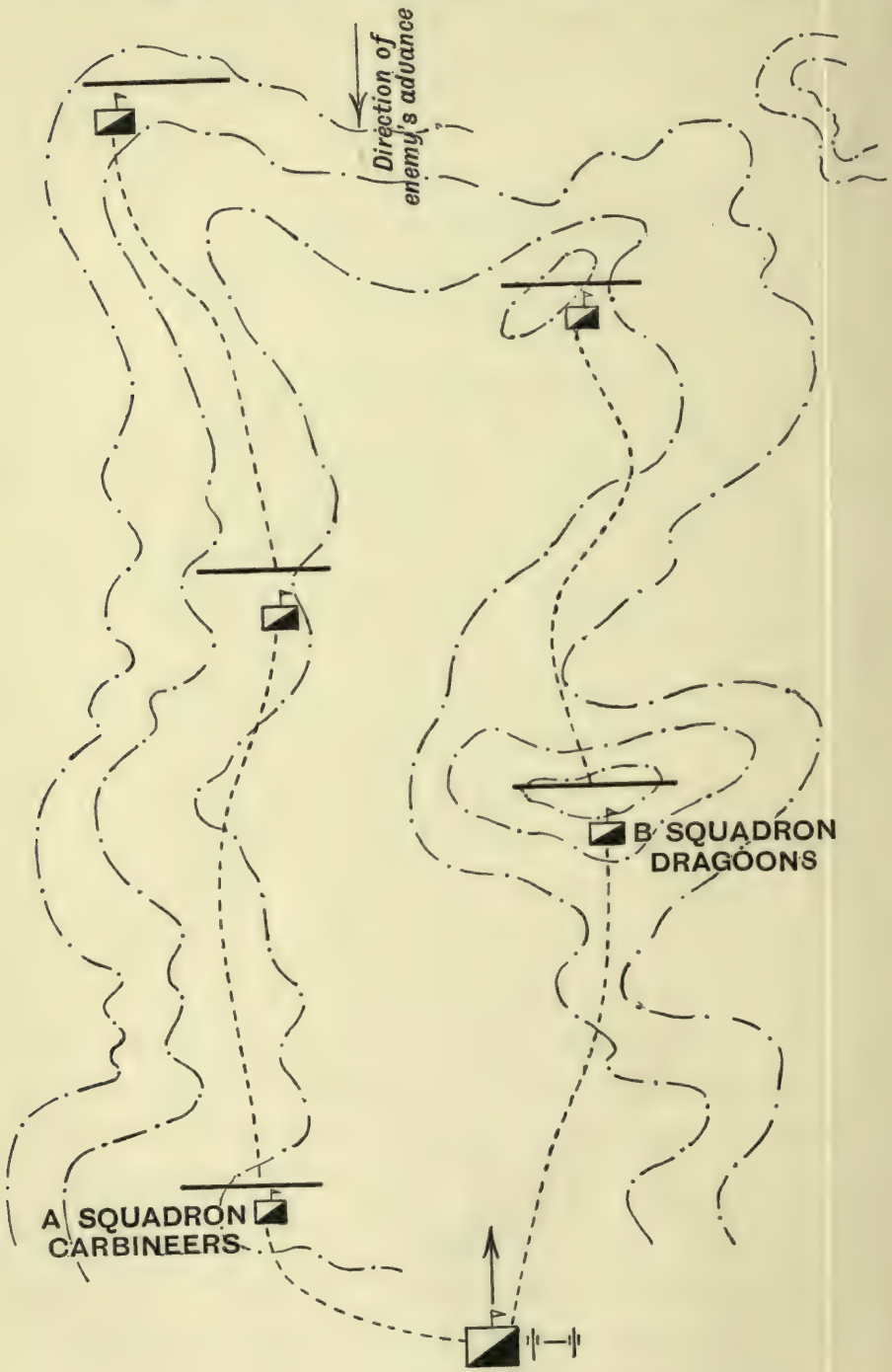

Diagram V.

inner flank and gets into the next likely position

half a mile farther on, and so on, each moving as soon as, or perhaps a little before, the other dismounts and gets ready to use rifle fire on all scouting parties, bodies of the enemy, etc. These parties are considerably disconcerted in their work by this mode of advance.

It is a point of honour, that these squadrons should if possible get up in time for the general encounter (unless detained as escort to horse artillery, a very likely contingency for one of them). But this bounden duty to be up in the fight, if possible, is a maxim with cavalry, against whom INACTION is the greatest reproach which can be levelled, next to cowardice, for which it is liable, and justly so, to be mistaken.

Having thus got a choice of artillery positions, and having determined the position of the enemy's cavalry, our first care is to select the best position for the horse artillery.

(*a*) It must have a good field of fire over the ground where the encounter is likely to take place.

(*b*) We do not want the enemy to locate it; therefore it may be advantageous to unlimber under cover and then manhandle the guns up, or down into action; or it may remain behind cover and come into action when it is *à propos*. It is quite possible that in order to bring an effective fire on the enemy's squadrons it may have to come into action on forward slopes.

(*c*) It is preferable for the guns to be defiladed from the enemy's artillery.

(*d*) The teams should be near the guns but under cover.

(*e*) The escort should be under cover from view, mounted or ready to mount, prepared to charge attacking squadrons in flank. Rifle fire against squadrons, who have nerve enough to charge a battery of Q.F. guns, is not likely to stop them.[1]

Whether we take all our squadrons away to a flank, whether we use one regiment, or wing of a regiment, as a feint or bait, how far we go to a flank, in what formation, and the hundred other possibilities, we must leave to be settled at the time. Only the broad principles can then be focussed, viz. :—

1. Utilize the ground, choosing cover for the squadrons and good ground to work over.
2. Deceive and bewilder the enemy.
3. Get well away from our own artillery.

Example

i. The regiment or squadrons A——A sent with the horse artillery (see Diagram VI.) must not keep too near it, because the enemy's horse artillery may get the range. Nothing shows more decidedly ignorance of the duties of escort to horse artillery than that the cavalry should hug or take into custody their horse artillery.

ii. It must not mask its own horse artillery fire against the enemy's cavalry or upon his guns. The

[1] I altogether disagree with General von Bernardi where he says, p. 157, *Cavalry in War and Peace*: "It is at the same time advisable that a specially detailed cavalry escort should be *dismounted* for this object."

cavalry officer who masks his own guns by his clumsiness usually deserves to be shelled by them.

iii. The O.C. of the escorting regiment or squadrons must use his own judgment as to whether he can spare one, two, or three squadrons to help the two attacking regiments in the combat or in the rally.

iv. He must decide whether to be outside or inside the horse artillery, or in wings both outside and inside.

v. Often the O.C. the regiment or squadrons A——A may have to decide if he shall show up as bait, but in doing so he must, again, never mask the artillery. He may (in this case) move west to his left, especially if he thinks Blue cavalry is coming on and has not seen the regiments C——C and B——B making their flank movement. But usually the regiment or squadrons A——A should move up in this case more to the right, east, as this means that Blue horse artillery will come into action facing south and consequently cannot easily change front and pelt the regiments C——C and B——B.[1]

As our horse artillery will always if possible come into action on a hill or on high ground there will be some hill behind which A——A is able to manœuvre or to get cover, or to simulate (by showing up in different places) a larger force than it actually represents.

The leading of the regiments B——B and C——C

[1] This is still more applicable in the fight of the cavalry division, since two horse artillery brigades in action occupy a front of 475 yards, and once the guns are in position the direction in which this front faces can only be altered to any appreciable extent by limbering up.

will depend on the signals sent from the Brigadier (who rides wide on the inner flank—eastern side in

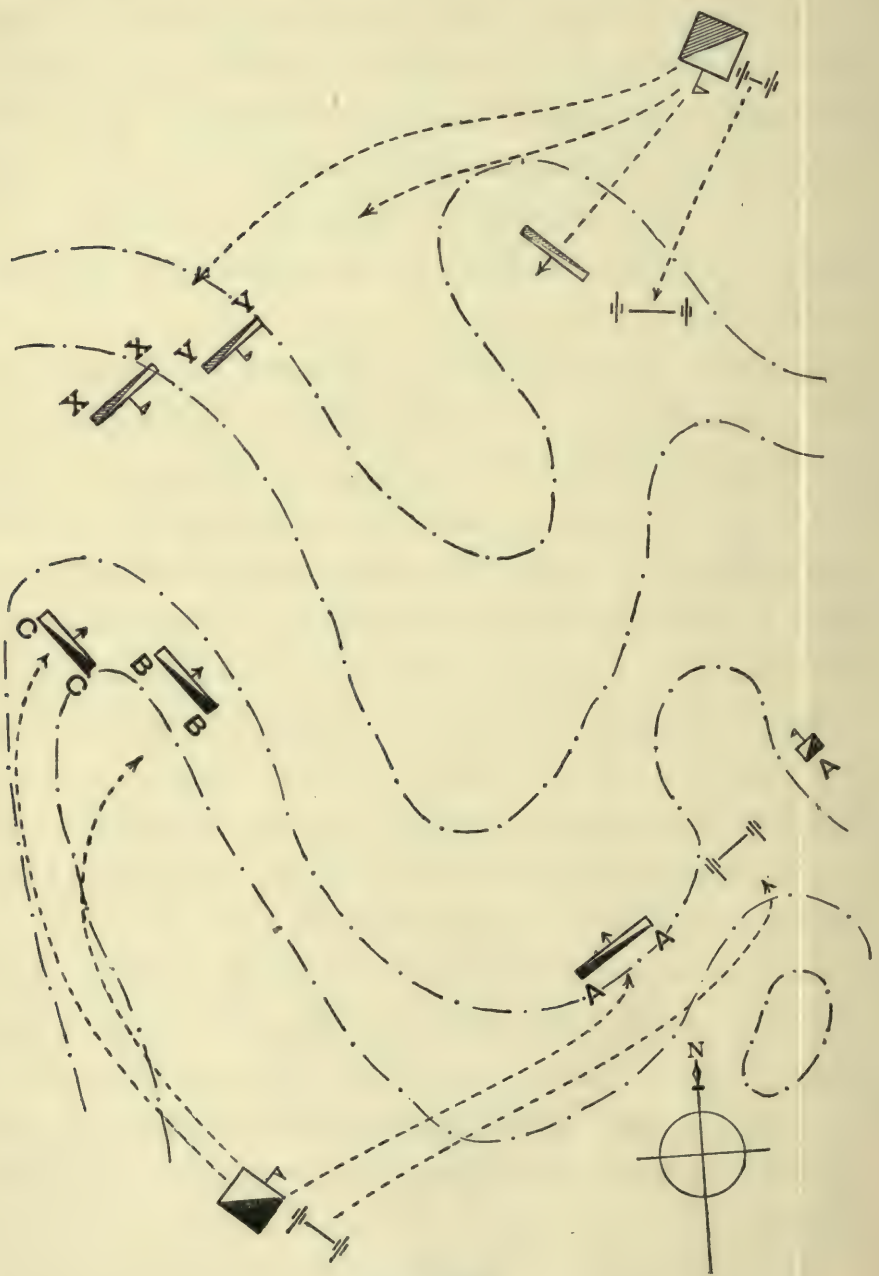

Diagram VI.

this case—and where he can see the enemy's advance) to the Brigade Major. These regiments B——B and

C——C should make their move if possible under cover from view, and at the critical moment the order to attack should be conveyed to them.

As one of the objects of this manœuvre is to give our guns a good target, the O.C. horse artillery must direct his fire on the enemy's squadrons, in this case, X——X and Y——Y. The enemy's artillery, if already in action, will sustain little harm from his fire. The result of the encounter will depend on which side wins the shock action, therefore every shell which falls in an enemy's squadron is a help. The enemy's supporting squadrons are a special target, also the enemy's rallying squadrons.

Let the O.C. horse artillery remember that the sight and sound of his bursting shells will often enlighten the Brigadier as to the position of the enemy's squadrons and guide him in his attack, on which everything depends.

Before the combat, RESOLUTION, *i.e.* fixedness of purpose, the instant adaptation of stratagem to the features of the terrain, an attack at the psychological moment galloping knee to knee; in the combat, constantly keeping a reserve and constantly re-forming into good order for the next effort,—these are the secrets with which to ensure coming successfully out of a cavalry encounter. "'Tis dogged as does it." But do not let the leader imagine that he will always be making an advance, when this combat comes off.

Especially to be deprecated is the unreasoning gallop of squadrons, so commonly seen at manœuvres

in an advance towards an enemy, which deprives them of any value from the reports of officers, patrols, etc.

If it is evident that the enemy has forestalled our manœuvre, and that any move to the front will place our brigade in the jaws of his attack, then, as Von Bernardi (page 147, *Cavalry in War and Peace*) says, the "deployment should either be on existing lines or to the rear, and should be covered by dismounted action of the advanced guard or by artillery fire. Only thus can the lost freedom of action be regained, as superior breadth of deployment is the first and perhaps the most important step towards maintenance of the initiative."

Other cases in which it may be a positive advantage to allow the enemy some measure of initiative occur either when you are quite ignorant of his strength, or when the ground on which your squadrons stand or in their rear is most suitable for the combat from your point of view.

In the passage of defiles in the face of an enemy, say, in the case of a river or swamp, the rule is for the column, as it emerges from the far end of the defile, to move in column of troops parallel to the river or swamp. It will thus (i.) be ready to wheel into line and attack quickly, (ii.) there is no fear of the column being pushed back on to succeeding troops coming through the defile, (iii.) the head of the defile is kept clear of troops, (iv.) there is one safe flank for your column, *i.e.* that on the side of the swamp or river, and (v.) there is not the same

danger of the enemy pounding[1] an easy mark at the mouth of the defile with his artillery. If your own artillery can occupy any ground on this side of the defile, from which the exit can be seen, the accompanying diagram shows that a considerable force of your cavalry can make the passage with

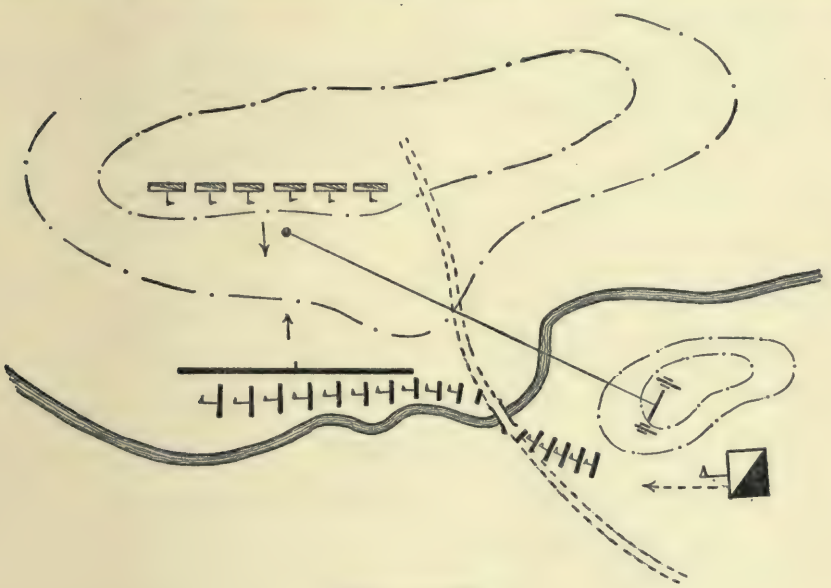

DIAGRAM VII.

comparative safety under cover of its fire. It should always be remembered that the attack against troops, in course of the passage of a defile, will usually take place when only that proportion has crossed which the enemy thinks he can beat decisively.

A word of warning is necessary as regards a common and most enticing error, which is that of allowing squadron after squadron to be drawn into a fight.

[1] General Sir D. Haig's *2nd Staff Ride*, p. 11: "With a force of greater strength than half a squadron, defiles should never be passed at a faster pace than the trot in order that each unit of the force may keep well closed up and the column be not unduly lengthened. After passing through, deployment should be made at a gallop so as to make room for units in rear."

As regards the dissemination of squadrons, this would not be such a serious matter if every detachment would return immediately its rôle had been played; but unfortunately Providence does not appear to make commanders of detachments like that; if it did, automatically our force would become, say, one-quarter stronger.[1]

[1] The use of the pompom, as a hint to a flank guard not to spend too long in a specially attractive farmhouse, is an extremist's view of this question.

CHAPTER VIII

CAVALRY IN THE GENERAL ENGAGEMENT

"It was thought that to engage the enemy to fight was our business."—CROMWELL at Preston.

"The part played varies according to the quality of the instrument and the capabilities of the operator."—CHERFILS.

IN the last few years considerable prominence has been given to the action of independent cavalry, and there is reason to believe that this might lead to a large portion of the cavalry of an army being detached when a general engagement was imminent. This tendency may well arise where the general officer commanding has not a complete grasp[1] or perhaps belief in the possibility of a rôle for cavalry on the battlefield, nor entire reliance on them for that assistance, which, if properly trained and directed, they are well able to give.[2]

[1] Cf. Langlois, *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*. Speaking of the battle of Colenso, he says: "The cavalry *received no orders*, and did nothing. In the whole day's fighting the cavalry brigade (six squadrons) lost two men altogether." May not this want of direction have been due in some degree to the well-known prejudice of the generalissimo against the cavalry arm?

[2] Cf. p. 206, Von der Goltz, *Nation in Arms*: "It is not sufficient to have good cavalry, it must also be well handled by the superior authorities. These latter are really responsible for many mistakes unfairly laid at the door of the cavalry. Cavalry divisions must be allowed a proper liberty of action, without entirely slipping out of the hands of the commander-in-chief; whilst the masses of cavalry were formerly kept back to be employed in reserves or in the pursuit, the tendency now exists to send them forward at

The general officer commanding may, under the impression that the combat can be carried through by the artillery and infantry without much further assistance, order the cavalry commander to take the bulk of his squadrons and make a detour, involving half the night spent in the saddle, and thus place himself on the flank or rear of the enemy, and there to attack or wait his opportunity in the event of the enemy's defeat.

Acting in accordance with these orders, we may picture the cavalry arrived at a point some twelve or fifteen miles away, where the leader may very well find it is by no means all plain sailing. His progress may be blocked at some bridge or defile, and, whilst he is endeavouring to push aside the opposition, reinforcements, including artillery, come upon the scene, and he finds that to avoid heavy loss he must draw off the larger portion of his force in order to make a still longer detour. This wastes several hours and results in a drawn fight, or, if he does get nearer to his objective, he finds that, with timely warning given, the enemy are well able to hold him off.

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once, on the first day, to a great distance in a certain direction. This, again, may produce the inconvenience of cavalry being wanting one day when most urgently required. The despatch of squadrons to the front, and the choice of the direction in which they are to proceed, must also be in accordance with a definite plan. Moreover, the commander-in-chief must not only be clear as to his real intentions, but must also communicate them with perfect clearness to the cavalry."

German Cavalry Regulations, 1909, para. 395: "Attempts on the more distant hostile communication may produce valuable results; but they must not distract the cavalry from its true battle objectives. In the event of an engagement, co-operation with a zest for victory must be the watchword for every formation, whether great or small." See also section 104, para. 4, section 110, para. 4, of the British F.S.R.

Meanwhile the flank left open, or practically denuded of mobile troops, has every chance of being turned; all the tendency of modern fighting is towards extension and dispersion, whilst the desperate counter-attack is the theme of every writer. We can imagine no more galling occurrence than a counter-attack,[1] thrust in on one's own flank (more probably than not, the very flank from which the cavalry have been sent), and, in their absence, carried through with decisive results. These wide turning movements, or rather action against the flank and rear of the enemy, are in the nature of putting all one's eggs in one basket, and not infrequently taking it for granted that the enemy will not stand his ground.

It has been very well said that cavalry is an arm of opportunity, and opportunities are most likely to occur where actual fighting is going on. Against the Boers, who had no idea of counter-attack, these turning movements came off; against well-led troops, suitably disposed in depth,[2] and avoiding wide dispersion, their success is very doubtful.

Napoleon said:

Cavalry charges were good at the beginning, during the

[1] *German Cavalry Regulations*, 1909, para. 393: "During the battle decisive intervention, whether to support or ward off the hostile attack, is possible only by throwing in large masses of cavalry."

Also see p. 33 of the *Report on 2nd Cavalry Staff Ride*, by General Sir D. Haig, where the co-operation of a cavalry division in ground to some extent obstructed by obstacles is described, and attention is drawn to the historical instances of Salamanca and Austerlitz, in which the co-operation of cavalry was a special feature.

[2] See Langlois, *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*, where the greatest stress is laid throughout on the depth of modern dispositions of troops on the battlefield.

course of, and at the end of a battle. They should always be made, if possible, on the flanks of infantry, especially when this last is engaged in front.—Napoleon's Maxim, No. 50.

He would no doubt go further now and speak of the intervention of cavalry with horse artillery and machine guns as likely to turn the scale in the crisis of battle.

But Napoleon would recognize that it is by rapidly prolonging their own flank against being turned, or by enveloping or enfilading the enemy's line by participation in the counter-attack, or by work such as that done by the German horse artillery and cavalry at Loigny-Poupry on December 2, 1870 (late in the war when the German cavalry had learnt their lesson), that cavalry show to advantage. There 2150 German sabres and 24 guns, acting in combination, first dashed aside the opposition offered by the French in villages on the left flank of their line of battle, and then, sweeping round, proceeded to threaten and shell the left rear of the French infantry line—good work, and showing the value of mobile forces boldly thrown at a flank, but lacking in the final stage in that resolute determination which gives full value to such a movement, and this, no doubt, because they had not been trained in peace to act together.[1]

This leads one to consider what was the training

[1] [This battle will be found well described by Colonel Lonsdale Hale, vol. liv., March 1910, *Journal of R.U.S.I.*]

It was afternoon on this occasion before the twenty-four guns rightly belonging to the cavalry mass were released from employment alongside the batteries of the general defence and allocated to work with the cavalry.

of our own cavalry subsequent to 1870. Was it not the general tendency of our authorities and tactical experts to discredit the action of cavalry on the battle-field, without considering whether the armament, organization, and previous training of the cavalry of both France and Germany were such as to lead to success?

These points all influenced the course of the actions in the first months of the 1870 war in the most remarkable manner. Again, was the leading, except for a few bright exceptions, satisfactory? French and German writers on cavalry plainly intimate that the direction of cavalry enterprise by the higher leaders, and the action of the cavalry leaders, were distinctly disappointing.[1]

Meantime a belief gained from the American War that dismounted tactics were the solution to the cavalry question obsessed some, as it always will those who lack (i.) a practical knowledge of the arm, (ii.) imagination, (iii.) an acquaintance with military history, though the most acute thinker of that time, Henderson, lays down very concisely in *Science of War*, p. 60, "that mounted infantry were absolutely worthless against cavalry."

In peace, as the value of the bullet rose, the use of cavalry fell in the mind of the man of theory. Probably only the few, who with an open mind thoroughly tested the two rival lines of action in the

[1] There are few more striking instances of this than the episode at Vionville, where General Frossard, who had desired General de Preuil to make a charge, replied to the latter when he pointed out that the charge was sure to result in failure, "Attack at once, or we are all lost."

field, and on every kind of ground, were able to give a correct appreciation. But these never swerved from the opinion that mounted men relying only on the rifle were hopeless in attack or in the open against cavalry, but were, on the other hand, of great value in defence, or in broken ground, or in retreat, and further, that many small opportunities, far more than for shock action, would be offered to them, which cunning and versatility would enable them to profit by.

But all this talk had not been without its effect, and the result was that it was not considered ridiculous that a large force of mounted men should be frittered away in ineffective dismounted action, sitting all day on a hill or ridge, and firing at great distances at an equally sticky enemy. Such action is a slur on cavalry for whom "Action and again action" is the motto.

If both cavalries work on this principle, and this was often the case both in the early portion of the South African War[1] and in the Manchurian campaign, certainly no important combats will take place; but, directly one side begins to "push," mounted combats will result, and as each side finds that the greatest number of squadrons, *ceteris paribus*, wins, there will be great combats of masses, and a "fight to a finish" amongst the cavalry on the flank of the great general encounter.

As we have said, in the South African War during

[1] The cavalry attack *en route* to the relief of Kimberley and several other occasions, when General French galvanized the squadrons into action, afford us certain proof that energetic action on the part of one combatant compels the other to take similar action or, as happened in these cases, decamp.

the first year, with few exceptions, fire at long distances and infinitely wearisome tactics were the rule; it was only in the last year of the war that the British cavalry, colonials, and mounted infantry—their attack in some cases supported by really effective and *à propos* artillery and machine gun fire—began to push and gallop at the Boers at every opportunity. Then the Boers always galloped away, but gradually they, too, learnt from us the value of pushing, and Botha, Delarey, and others executed some good charges with marked effect, but they never attempted, and wisely so, to charge men armed with swords. That was too much for the cavalry soldier to hope for.

In the Manchurian War the Japanese, with their small force of cavalry, wisely played the defensive game; the Russians,[1] trained and organized for twenty years on wrong principles, and led without much attempt at reasoned dash or enterprise, seldom imposed their will on the enemy, or made any effort to push in with their numerous squadrons and sotnias

[1] "The greatest error that the Russians made before even the outbreak of hostilities, and which continued throughout the course of the campaign, was, notoriously, the underrating of their opponents. It is said that the most influential authorities could not bring themselves, and did not deem it necessary, to detail a sufficient proportion of the good regular cavalry present in European Russia—guards and dragoons—for the theatre of war in Asia. Only three regiments were sent out, of which it may be added the 51st and 52nd Dragoons only reached their destination in the 17th Army Corps area at the end of July 1904. How blameworthy the action of the army leaders was in not devoting more attention to the employment of their best-trained and most reliable cavalry was most conclusively proved by both these regiments of dragoons. For they succeeded, in what the Cossacks up till then had had extremely limited success, namely, in thoroughly clearing up the situation as regards their opponents, . . ." etc., etc.—Supplement No. 86, *Internationale Revue über die gesammten Armeen und Flotten.*

on an open flank. If there was an exception it was when, before the battle of Mukden, a force of Cossacks under General Liubarin attacked the Japanese right flank in the mountains, and are stated to have "rendered the situation critical" till driven off by mixed forces of infantry and cavalry. This is given as one of the few cavalry lessons of the Manchurian War. The Russian cavalry officer had not received sufficient training in grand tactics, nor does the combined action of their horse artillery with cavalry appear to have been in any respect effective.

The lesson for our cavalry from these two wars appears to be, that we should teach our officers to think about something bigger than the tactics of a squadron or regiment, to learn *esprit d'armée*, to remember that a few independent squadrons cut up rarely influence a war, whereas in every big combat the result (and that result may be affected largely by the leading of a few squadrons) is a national matter. And there always recurs the most supreme question for the cavalry leader of masses on the battlefield, whether, apart from the cases in which a sacrifice is necessary, the anticipated results are in any way proportionate with the stake. Even the riding down of an infantry brigade will not always compensate for the expenditure of a cavalry division.

Langlois pictures "cavalry with its light batteries in the decisive attack moving by ways which are hidden from view and fire . . . falling on the enemy in mass and surprising him. Reconstructing his (the enemy's) defences, and keeping hostile troops at a

distance, measures which," he says, "require a short dismounted fight, then part of the cavalry advance and harass and prevent the enemy returning, whilst the rest holds the position with fire. The infantry will follow the cavalry as quickly as possible."

There is no more important subject of training for the cavalry officer than cavalry action on the battle-field of all arms. Theoretical study is not enough, it is absolutely necessary to study in the field with troops or flags representing troops. Since cavalry action is almost invariably[1] on the flanks, staff rides, cavalry instructional rides, manœuvres, and other exercises can commence by dealing with only one flank, thus half the number of men, flags, etc., will suffice.

The director should never permit one side to know the strength in any arm on the other side; this is desirable, if only to increase the difficulty and value of gaining information by reconnaissance in these exercises. For this purpose a proportion of cavalry-scouting parties should be detailed. Too much stress can scarcely be laid on this essential of training. Cavalry can now simulate infantry, smokeless powder renders it impossible to judge the volume of fire, every bit of information has to be fought for, and will cost the lives of both horses and men. Even the boldest and most cunning scouting, without fighting, will not lead to any certain information; it is "peace-time talk" to imagine that it will be otherwise.

[1] Von Bernardi, *Cavalry in Future Wars*, p. 81: "The cavalry should be forward and sideward to the line of battle."

Having this in view, the director should lay the greatest stress on dash and enterprise as opposed to stickiness and a desire to do nothing or await further report. It is at these exercises that the director can go far to establish a *doctrine*, that of the resolute offensive.

If officers cannot act with dash in field manœuvres, how can they be expected to do so in war? Ground gained in peace manœuvres matters little, but in war a position gained on the flank of an army by a cavalry brigade may now mean the enfilading by horse artillery of entrenched infantry for three miles in extent.

A very good plan is to take some well-known battle and lay out the situation with flags at some portion of the day, and then work out the cavalry action in theory and practice. This will admit of considerable variation. To lay out fresh battlefields or inaugurate new general ideas each time leads to waste of time in preliminary study of the situation. There is not the slightest doubt that the want of this very practical study has affected the leading of cavalry in the past in a marked degree.[1] Want of determination comes from want of knowledge of what to do in the situation. In the past, sticky leading has been condoned because few knew any better. Long ago Lewal wrote prophetically of the

[1] General Sir D. Haig's *Report on 2nd Cavalry Staff Ride*, p. 33: "The main lessons are that the cavalry leader must be in close communication with the commander-in-chief, that the staff and all leaders must be carefully prepared for this kind of work, and the troops trained to take advantage of ground."

bad effect on cavalry of "being umpired out of action at peace manœuvres, and told of smokeless powder and magazine rifles" (Lewal, p. 62).

It is all very well to say that every hill should be regarded as being held by the enemy till you know otherwise, but let us take care to know one way or other without delay, and not to imagine that there is any great value or safety in being on a hill. Hills may be well shelled by the enemy's horse artillery, whilst his cavalry gallop up to the dead ground to be found in front and flank of nine hills out of ten, where, if supported by horse artillery fire, it is better placed than the dismounted men on the hill.

Finally our leaders, after preparing themselves, their staffs, and subordinate leaders by constant practice, "must ever remember and must impress on their subordinates that hesitation and delay handicap operations far more heavily than do mere mistakes in choice of methods."—*German Cavalry Training*, para. 399.

That the risks which one side takes paralyses the action of the other has been true of every battle. There is (and peace-time theorists on the military art often neglect this fact) a first idea or instinct in the minds of the majority of the human race, that the man or animal dashing straight at them has some good reason to believe that he can, and will, hurt them; this primary instinct leads them to subordinate themselves to the initiative of the other. Watch the unreasoning game of chase and check between a cat

and a dog, and you have a good example of much that happens, and will always happen, on a battlefield.[1]

"Initiative is the greatest virtue in a leader; to avoid dissipation of force is a well-proved means of victory."—*German Cavalry Training*, para. 407.

Conclusions

1. There are risks of doubtful value in action directed on wide lines against the enemy's flank and rear.

2. The 1870 and American Wars confused the issues and led in some cases to sticky action by cavalry on South African battlefields.

3. In Manchuria the Japanese adopted correct tactics in view of Russian want of enterprise and their own want of cavalry. The rôle of the weaker cavalry was exemplified in some respects.

4. Push on the part of one side will compel the other to bring up more squadrons and lead to the fight of cavalry masses.

5. It is only by special training that cavalry leaders can learn their duties in a general engagement.

6. Much depends on the leader's initiative, whilst this again depends on his knowledge gained by previous practice in similar circumstances.

There are those who ask, "But where are the Ziethen and Seydlitz cavalry charges nowadays?"

[1] Ardant du Picq gives an account of how two parties of infantry, suddenly meeting each other as they advanced over a hill-crest, *both* turned and ran away.

Let them call to mind, for it is instructive to do so' the combination of circumstances, and, be it noted, circumstances which may well rise again, which conduced to the success of the cavalry of Frederick the Great.

I. A king general, who had a taste for and knowledge of training cavalry.

II. A training of all ranks suited to the war about to be undertaken.

III. A cavalry with picked leaders quite unencumbered by officers past or unsuited to their work.

IV. Horses well conditioned under the eye of an autocrat, who had the common sense to demand and see that he got, not fat, but fit horses.

V. A skilled direction of the cavalry on the battlefield by a cool and intensely determined generalissimo, such as Frederick the Great undoubtedly was.

Now let us, on the other hand, state the case in the South African operations of 1899-1902. (In almost the same words as regards some paragraphs as were used in 1897.)

I. An unskilled training and inspection of cavalry in the large proportion of cases, often conducted by officers of other arms, and such as tended to inspire all ranks with a desire for display and fine appearance on parade, rather than with a whole-souled yearning for efficiency for the war in hand.

II. The training of cavalry regiments in small, flat twelve-acre drill-fields walled in from the slums of a city, in which cavalry were still stationed for hopelessly out-of-date political reasons. What real

cavalry training was possible along the tram lines and between rows of suburban villas ?

III. A personnel too largely drawn from towns, and ignorant of the exigencies of campaigning horse-management.

IV. Horses, three-quarters bred, of fair pace and condition, but the latter necessary qualification for a campaign entirely spoiled in most cases by, say, a thirty days' voyage, followed by a five or six days' railway journey, then semi-starvation at the end of a line of communication, then some quick work followed by two or three days' total starvation, then more work, and so on. Constantly our strategy outran our supply arrangements and the condition of our horses.

V. An enemy fighting in their own country, and each man owning two or three hardy, well-conditioned country-breds.

VI. Tactics of the enemy; to hold on to a position with rifle fire, and when seriously attacked or their flanks turned to disperse at a gallop.

Tactics all very well in their way, and just as disconcerting and annoying to our squadrons as they were to Murat's cavalry in the advance into Russia; but these Parthian tactics are only suited to a limited number of strategical phases, a point difficult to bring home to the mind of those who have not studied strategy. They were tactics which resulted in a loss to the Boers of about 5000 men, generally foot people, at Paardeberg and, later, another 5000 in the Wittebergen. Meanwhile the cavalry to which they were opposed was able, by simple turning

movements, to afford the main column, a practically uninterrupted advance from the Orange River to the Portuguese border.

It is strange, indeed, how the lesson of those operations has in many cases been read upside down by a nation which takes no steps to study military history, and which, consequently, forgets that the spirit of vigorous offensive, which did and must result in occasional heavy loss, had been sternly discountenanced by the majority of their press, after the experiences of Black Monday. "Conduct the operations without loss, or, better, by diplomacy—and above all with kindness," was then the cry.

Pursuit

One of the great fallacies, and one to which in England especially we are victims, is that war can be conducted on haphazard principles by the instinct of brave men.

Not only do these brave men "let us in," on every possible occasion (especially when they are so brave and foolish as to neglect proper precautions), but they forget that the sole thing in war is to "get there," that is, to bring the enemy to his knees and win.

One of their failings, and it is a typical British failing, is the neglect to pursue, or, if they pursue, they neglect to do so properly. Again, and again, in the early part of the operations in South Africa was this neglected. The first good instance of pursuit, conducted on proper principles, was that carried out

by General French, and resulting in the ultimate surrender of Cronje. Why was this on the right principle? The answer is, "Because it was conducted on the principle of "the parallel pursuit," and resulted in intercepting Cronje at a crossing of the Modder River.

It is in such matters that the professional has the advantage of the amateur; the latter would, no doubt, see no reason why a pursuit should do otherwise than follow in the tracks of the enemy, forgetting that there he will find the best and freshest troops, with good supplies of ammunition, and under the best leaders,[1] their orders may probably be, "To stop and die." Again, that along this line he will run his head against positions, hastily prepared no doubt, but still positions, which are meant to delay pursuit. The whole proceeding would be analogous to trying to beat the enemy at chess by taking piece after piece till only the king was left.

Compare with this the "parallel pursuit." Sufficient troops are pushing the enemy's rearguard and lulling his main force to a fancied security; then the cavalry leader moves several miles to the flank of the direction taken by the enemy with as much speed as possible, since there is nothing to delay him, and he goes on till there is some obstacle, perhaps some defile, which the enemy must cross; here he throws himself boldly in the way of the enemy, of whom those who have led the stampede, the weakest and

[1] Ney, "the bravest of the brave," found riding alone in rear of the retreating French army, was asked, "Where is the rearguard?" "I am the rearguard," was the reply.

least courageous, will be in front. Ten to one some of these will surrender, unable to bear up against this fresh disaster, and may be used to assist to block the defile, and thus affect the *moral* of those who are following, and who are, perhaps, in better order.

To the minds of leaders of the stamp of Napoleon's marshals this form of pursuit was ever present, and we come on instances of it.[1] It is essentially a duty of cavalry and horse artillery.

That it often requires strong determination on the part of the leader to urge tired men and horses to pursue is well known. After the battle of Katzbach, Blücher had pressed his cavalry to pursue, but these made a very weak attempt at pursuit, blaming the weather and alleging extreme fatigue. Blücher summed up the situation of cavalry as follows :—

> The State can afford to lose a few hundred horses in order to make a victory complete, or when it is a question of the annihilation of the enemy's entire army. To neglect to obtain the full results of a victorious battle is inevitably to oblige yourself sooner or later to gamble again.

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[1] After the action at the bridge of El Rey, St. Cyr sent his cavalry in pursuit of the Spanish forces who were making for the defiles of Montserrat. The French cavalry, gaining ground at a gallop on the left flank of the column of fugitives, took up a position at the entrance to the defile, and captured the whole of the enemy's supplies and baggage as well as 10,000 prisoners and twenty-five guns.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISPOSITION OF CAVALRY IN A CAMPAIGN

FIRST PART

It is related that its owner tried as an experiment to find out what was the smallest amount on which a horse could work. When he had reduced the animal to one straw per diem, the experiment ceased, as the horse died.

The reader, constantly bearing in mind the above anecdote (since, if great generals have overlooked in the past the moral of the tale, there is no reason why others should not do so in future), may proceed to the subject of this chapter, but not without the recurrent thought, that, however dashing the conception of the use of cavalry in a campaign, this one point must be foremost. What will the cavalry horses live on? Horses cannot live on nothing. Few survive if put for a prolonged period on ½-grain rations and no hay or grazing, if such is followed by work.

How far motor vehicles carrying supplies have changed the aspect of affairs in regard to this question is at present a moot point. Undoubtedly the effect

of the domination of the air by man has materially affected the question of obtaining information.

The principle, "that an army should place in its front the whole of its available cavalry forces from the very beginning of a campaign," to some extent arises from the desirability of an undisturbed concentration for one's own army, and also the advantage of checking that of the enemy.

Next in order will be the desire of the commander-in-chief of the army to have definite information of the enemy's movements whilst at the same time his own movements are covered. This will enable him to direct the movements of his army, whilst still at a distance from the enemy's advanced guards, and effect concentration for battle neither too soon nor too late (since both of these contingencies entail grave inconveniences), but at the right moment.

But when it comes to practical politics, it is plain, and must be regarded as a principle, that a cavalry brigade, division or corps can not be relied upon to perform efficiently the duties of policeman and detective at one and the same time. The duty of the latter would carry the former away from his beat.

The French cavalry in 1870, though they possessed what Ardant du Picq describes as the true "Casse cou"[1] readiness to charge (and by the bye, that *is* a portion of the *cavalry spirit*), almost entirely lacked skilled direction by the higher leaders. This fault

[1] "Casse cou," a rare plant, and much smothered in Great Britain in the twenty-five years previous to the South African War with the inevitable effect.

was no doubt due, in some degree, to the three arms training each in separate water-tight compartments, and not on a large and comprehensive scale in peace, precisely as Langlois says of us in reference to our army's work in South Africa: "The English took no steps in peace to create and strengthen any union between the arms, and evil overtook them."

Direction by the higher leaders will always be lacking, where those leaders, in peace time, are unable to divorce themselves from the surroundings and prejudices of their own particular arm, whatever it may be, and to enter whole-heartedly and unreservedly into the spirit of the Napoleonic maxim (No. 47): "Infantry, cavalry, and artillery *are nothing without each other.*"

Be that as it may, after the 1870-71 war the French cavalry had a moving spirit in General Galliffet, and he was well supported by some of the cleverest French military writers. They dissected French and German cavalry action in 1870-71 (and that of cavalry in other wars), laying bare the mistakes and failures of the cavalry of both armies. They saw what was wanted, higher direction and co-ordination of the work of cavalry, so that the two functions of cavalry, information and security (prior to its rôle on the battlefield), might be realized to their full extent. Their deduction from the campaigns of the Napoleonic period was, that that great leader and organizer had discerned the impossibility of co-ordinating these duties; that in his earlier campaigns there were two great units of war,

the cavalry of army corps and a corps of reserve cavalry;[1] the latter was composed of numerous light cavalry, acting about a day in front of the columns of the main body. Again, that in 1812, corresponding with the formation of groups of armies, the corps of cavalry was created to act independently, in advance of the general movement of the armies, making a third great unit. They arrived at the conclusion that war brings into play three great units, each of which requires its special cavalry.

1. In front of armies under the generalissimo an independent cavalry, in one or more bodies, to insure liberty of offensive action to the generalissimo.

2. In each army a division of cavalry to ensure to it the liberty of defensive action by giving time to concentrate and take up favourable positions.

3. In each army corps a regiment or half-regiment to ensure tranquillity and freedom from surprise.

Nor did they fail to bring to notice that Napoleon's system was to find a cavalry leader, and let him organize his cavalry to help the plan of campaign, and not to waste his cavalry in a sort of insurance policy.

The essence of cavalry is offence, "offensive résolue, offensive quand même offensive à outrance, qui fut le plus souvent la seule règle de tactique," not defence and shepherding infantry divisions;[2] this

[1] Un corps de réserve de cavalerie qui devait, à la fois, éclairer, couvrir et seconder l'armée.—Picard, vol. i. p. 257.

[2] In the campaign of Jena, 1806, the Prussian cavalry still maintained the Ziethen and Seydlitz tradition; they were well horsed, well trained, and

latter work does not demand the most highly trained cavalry.

By these steps gradually the principle, which is clearly stated in our F.S. Regulations, was arrived at, viz. :

> The main force of cavalry will usually be organized in one or more cavalry divisions, and retained as the instrument of strategical reconnaissance under the immediate orders of the commander-in-chief.—Part II., British F.S.R., 1909, p. 25.

At the present date the French, German, and Austrian organization is practically identical in this respect. All recognize that "we must fight to reconnoitre, and fight to screen."[1]

The rôle of cavalry, as defined at p. 182 of the French *Service de la Cavalerie*, 1909, is as follows :

> 1. *The Cavalry of Exploration* (answering to our own independent cavalry), the personal agent of the generalissimo, is sent where he wishes, in quest of the news he desires. This news the leader of this cavalry must send in good time ; his independence is limited to the means he employs to get news. The cavalry of exploration may also be sent on special missions against the columns or convoys of the enemy, and ought, *whilst observing its instructions and carrying out its* important rôle, to seize any opportunity of destroying the enemy's cavalry.

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extraordinarily exact in their evolutions ; but the squadrons were mixed up with infantry divisions by groups of ten squadrons, and commanded by the aged lieutenants of the Great Frederick, still living on the traditions of their youthful successes. Direction was entirely wanting in the disposition of the cavalry, though it is said that at no time was military literature in a more flourishing condition than in the years following the death of Frederick the Great, and mathematical science was especially held in honour.

[1] Von Bernardi, *Cavalry in Future Wars*, p. 32 of Goldman's translation.

Cavalry is the arm, above all, of surprise, and consequently may often obtain the greatest results by a sudden attack on the wings or rear of the adversary.

2. *The Cavalry of the Army Corps* (answering to our protective cavalry) and the divisional cavalry find out and inform their commander what is happening in the zone allotted to them.

They must keep off the enemy's cavalry, guard the columns against surprise, cover their deployment, and seek every opportunity of intervening with effect in the combat.

3. *The Divisional Cavalry* may, in the combat, be the only troops on whom the divisional general can depend for safety from surprise: their commander must, accordingly, not only seek opportunities to use the bulk of his troops opportunely in the combat, but also give information and guard the division against surprise on its flanks and rear.

What use, then, does the generalissimo make of his independent cavalry? He sends it forward to tear the veil from his adversary's armies; whilst thus engaged it may, in fact almost certainly will, meet the enemy's independent cavalry similarly employed, when, with a view to carrying out its orders, it will probably be compelled to fight—to fight for information.

Let us suppose it successful and the squadrons of the enemy's independent cavalry dispersed, unable to face their adversary. Our independent cavalry push on to the enemy and meet the screen of cavalry, the service of security which covers his army. This again they must tear aside, and lay bare the heads of the enemy's infantry columns. Even then their mission is not complete; they must direct their energies against the

flanks of the enemy's columns and demoralize them. It is plain, then, that on the successful action of the independent cavalry great issues may depend.

With regard to the movement of these forces, whenever cavalry are moving in the direction of an enemy (whether they are the independent cavalry or the protective cavalry), it is obvious that they will endeavour to pass quickly through ground which is for any reason unfavourable to them and advantageous to the enemy for attack, whilst they will dwell in positions which present obvious advantages to them. The result is, that from large forces of cavalry down to the smallest unit there is a tendency to move forward in bounds.

The protective cavalry will further be influenced by the desire to forestall the enemy in gaining positions for the infantry columns following them, and in taking up for the night a line of outposts on some natural obstacle, which will give them some security whilst they are halted.

It is quite a debatable question whether the evolution of cavalry into three classes as at present is not largely due to the arming of cavalry with a good rifle, and to rendering them consequently able to protect themselves, and able to turn out small parties of the enemy who hold defiles, railway stations, etc., against them. The new German Cavalry Regulations, para. 391, state: "Thus cavalry, owing to its great adaptability, is capable of independent action in practically every eventuality of the battlefield."

In any case horse artillery, machine guns, and the rifle have added enormously to the defensive power of cavalry; when, therefore, the protective cavalry are thrown back on the infantry, by the enterprise of the enemy's independent squadrons, the latter may lightly, and without warning, find themselves attacking infantry in position, by mistake for dismounted cavalry, and consequently suffer very severely. Not only that, but the mixed detachments of all arms likely to be met with at this juncture, possess a power and length of resistance, which our cavalry may perhaps successfully simulate, and thus hold back and delay the advance of the enemy's cavalry.

SECOND PART

"A writer upon strategy and tactics ought to treat his subjects as national strategy and tactics; for only such teaching can be of real service to his country."—Von der Goltz, *Nation in Arms*, p. 143.

Instead of labouring the point as to the rôle of cavalry under these circumstances, perhaps one may be permitted to recall to the reader's mind that, unless we go back to Napoleonic precedent, there are no actual experiences in modern times of the effect to be obtained by using cavalry in the manner prescribed at present. The whole is pure theory, but we can say from our own experience that the protective cavalry may fail if they attempt to be strong everywhere on the old "pepper-box" system.

The drives in South Africa, in which we were strong nowhere and weak everywhere, proved, as

indeed was expected, that a strong and determined enemy can always break through the long weak line unless the latter follows the line of some serious obstacle.

It is also a matter of easy demonstration and universal agreement that the cavalry which dominates in the first great cavalry struggle has already gained an enormous advantage for its side.

What is the logical outcome? It is, that unless (1) our cavalry force is redundant, or (2) there are difficulties in feeding our independent cavalry, or (3) the enemy's cavalry is very weak, or (4) our cavalry comprises squadrons, which we cannot, from reasons of want of training or armament, oppose to the enemy's cavalry, we shall see every available squadron taken from the protective cavalry and handed over to the independent cavalry. Intelligence comes before security.[1] Meanwhile the protective rôle will be carried out by divisional mounted troops, cyclists, and infantry detachments (see sec. 92, F.S.R.).

Ceteris paribus, the first advantage will be with the side which can put the greatest number of squadrons into the corps of independent cavalry, and, in view of this, a fact plainly spoken of and counted upon in all strategical conceptions of future campaigns on the Continent, the preponderance of well-trained squadrons is clearly the object to be aimed at.

Generally speaking, the ideas which are promul-

[1] Von Bernardi, *Cavalry in Future War*, p. 28.

gated as to the rôle for the weaker cavalry, by which a cavalry, worse trained, worse armed, and proportionately less in numbers will compensate for these shortcomings by superior tactics, are purely Utopian. This "fond thing vainly invented" may interest or beguile the mind of the unfortunate tax-payer, but does not belong to the regions of plain military common sense, which, in its preparation for war, has no place for chance work, and must have no weak link in the chain.

Let those with whom the wish is master of the thought read General von Bernardi's most recent statement in *Cavalry in Peace and War*, p. 356, where speaking of the German force of trained cavalry, enormous as it already is, he says:

> I have repeatedly stated that I consider our cavalry to be of itself too weak. The more I study modern warfare, the more convinced do I feel that the value of the arm, when handled according to modern ideas, has increased.

Let us remember that cavalry cannot be improvised, and that even squadrons of the best class of mounted rifles, formed entirely of natural horsemen and fairly good shots, are very heavily penalized, apart from their armament and training, unless they have professional brigade, regimental, and squadron leaders, and know how to work with horse artillery. They cannot be expected to face trained and properly organized cavalry brigades on anything like equal terms. At the same time, if reliance is placed on numbers, one is at once faced (i.) by the forage

supply and its carriage, (ii.) by the enormous item of expense in remounting, already referred to in the chapter on "The horse."

The outcome is that one arrives at this plain and simple proposition.[1] Only the most highly trained cavalry soldier is worth a horse and food for his horse when a nation is engaged against an enemy of modern continental type. This point is undoubtedly grasped on the Continent, where the proposal to use cyclists as a reserve of riflemen with cavalry is generally accepted.

Every one, practically, can now ride and look after a bicycle, and given passable roads, cyclists can travel farther and faster than horses, and carry more days' reserve rations. In war in a civilized and well-roaded country they cannot fail to be a most useful adjunct to cavalry: (1) as a reserve of rifles, (2) as despatch riders, (3) as an accessory in outpost and reconnoitring duty.

It is not the scheme of this book to enter into the question of training other than regular cavalry, nor to enter into any discussion as to the precise value in war of hastily raised mounted troops; since in doing so one might say something which had the appearance of discouraging the volunteer; whereas there is no question that the spirit, which animated

[1] In a well-reasoned article on "Cavalry in the Russo-Japanese War" in the *Internationale Revue über die gesammten Armeen und Flotten*, it is said: "So it is seen that in this war it has been proved once again, and that to a high degree, that nothing great can be accomplished with improvisations of cavalry, and that cavalry, especially when incorporated in divisions, if it wishes to be led to high aims, cannot be stamped out of the ground immediately before great events."

for instance those yeomanry and colonial troops who came out early in the operations in South Africa, 1899-1902, is a great national and imperial asset.

At the same time it is right to make it perfectly plain that the non-professional cavalry soldier has an exceedingly hard task before him, and one requiring very exceptional qualities such as are not usually found in those who do not possess the initial asset of being constantly in the saddle and out in the open. Even these must find it extremely difficult to train to anything but a very mediocre standard, unless they possess (i.) sufficient leisure to prepare themselves amidst the surroundings of regular troops, and (ii.) the large amount of patriotism and right feeling which induces a man voluntarily to place himself under and endure the irksome restraints of discipline.[1] Ten times more does this apply to the officer; purely amateur officers are poison (the virus being in direct proportion to their rank), and entirely out of place in war. To imagine that it is patriotism to wait till war begins, and then aspire to lead others, is an idea that should be crushed once for all. It is not patriotism, it is murder.

Few amateurs would aspire to conduct the opera-

[1] Von der Goltz, *The Nation in Arms*, p. 168, says: "The armies of the French Republic numbered many members of the highest aristocracy in the lower ranks, and there was no lack of intelligence, but it was an undisciplined intelligence wanting in uniform training—hence also an absence of unity of action. This latter is guaranteed by certain principles being engrafted into the flesh and blood of the commanders of troops by teaching and practice. The idea of utilizing our numerical superiority and the efficiency of our troops in a vigorous and rapid offensive pervaded all our minds, this principle having been imbibed with the very air of our military school. If such discipline of the intelligence exists, the commander may, with composure, leave much to the initiative of the individual."

tions in a London hospital, and the operations of war are, in their way, no less intricate, and perhaps entail more loss of life and limb when conducted by the unskilled. The amateur who comes out to the war, with the courage of ignorance, and finds how helpless he is, how useless are his best efforts, how complete the disillusionment of those under him as to his power to keep or get them out of trouble, let alone hurt the enemy, will, if he survives, have learnt a very useful and painful lesson, but no nation can afford to give lessons on the field of battle.

The cavalry of an army are a part of a machine, in which reliance must be placed, and in which every nut or screw of doubtful metal is a danger. Cherfils rightly says: "Three-quarters of the strategy of war lies in the method of employment of the cavalry." Why? Because of the supreme importance to the generalissimo of *Liberty of Manœuvre.* But this liberty can only be gained by a thrusting forward of masses of cavalry, *which must go on* and get the greatest share of the terrain intervening between the two armies. As an instance of this, in the Ulm Campaign on the 4th October Napoleon in his orders to Murat makes it plain that he wants him to push aside the enemy's patrols and make plenty of prisoners; he tells him to take *three* divisions of cavalry and do so, leaving *one* division only to watch his left flank, that on which Napoleon was making his main infantry advance. He left the initiative to Murat.

Does any one imagine that these cavalry masses

could, solely by means of musketry fire, drive the enemy out of the positions which they will take up, on finding a stronger force of cavalry in front of them? We believe certain people do reckon on this, though it has never occurred in actual combat, and (in the opinion of those who have witnessed attempts at it) will not do so in the immediate future. Across the open plains the weaker, worse armed and equipped cavalry will keep falling back rapidly to the next defensive line. If this is a river or range of hills, experience shows that the stronger cavalry will soon cross it and move forward.

Too much emphasis can hardly be laid on the value of success in the first great cavalry combat, in "initial ascendancy."[1] Let those who doubt this inquire of any who have been on stricken fields and have learnt the great lessons only taught by defeat.

But these lessons are not to be confused with the tendency to say "A" nation beat "B" nation, therefore "A" nation's methods are right, and forthwith slavishly follow their methods, even carrying this so far as to follow the fashion of some pelisse or *pickelhaube* as well.

Occasionally the Boers read us a lesson, and, as Kipling says, "a jolly good lesson too"; at once there is a great rush to imitate their methods, by those impressed by them, as though these were applicable to every possible case. To take one case—they are

[1] Nor does the effect of the victory of masses end there. "It intensifies and invigorates the sense of superiority in individual combats, and is essential if the patrols are to carry out their duties in the true cavalry spirit."—Von Bernardi, *Cavalry in Future Wars*, p. 31.

certainly not suitable for mounted troops who wish to advance. In that case we want the resolute offensive, with a thorough understanding in all ranks that they must be prepared to fight for information and liberty of manœuvre. Now spectators of any large fight in South Africa cannot claim to have seen this resolute offensive on the part of the Boers. They never pushed us back, partly, no doubt, from difficulties of command, but chiefly from defective armament and training, and consequent inability to bring the combat to a hand-to-hand fight. On the other hand, they fell back fighting whenever we attacked resolutely. Exactly what a generalissimo could not permit his cavalry to do. Why? Because he, by doing so, surrenders his share of liberty of manœuvre, of which there is a limited amount between the armies, to his adversary.

Our conclusion is that *the trained cavalry masses which have a personal weapon and good support from horse artillery will push back any improvised or worse-armed cavalry with the utmost rapidity across all open ground, and that the moral ascendancy thus established will render the enemy's defeat in rough ground an easy task.*

CHAPTER X

HORSE ARTILLERY AND CAVALRY

"Fundamental principles of action against different arms must be laid down so definitely that complicated orders in each particular case will not be required. This is needed because the utmost possible independence of leaders down to the squadron commander is desirable. It must not degenerate into selfish wilfulness."—VON BERNARDI.

THAT modern horse artillery coupled with cavalry and machine guns has almost unlimited opportunities can hardly be gainsaid. Only a madman or an absolute ignoramus would willingly dispense with horse artillery. But can it be said that, without an organization and training in peace-time, which has afforded full opportunity of practising every situation which we can meet, we shall get full co-operation in war?

Arms brought together almost for the first time on the battlefield cannot have mutual confidence in one another. Yet how much depends on a thorough understanding and good feeling between the cavalry leader and his commander of horse artillery. If the battery commander cannot from constant practice and usage actually foretell nine times out of ten what the cavalry brigadier will order at a certain stage of the attack, or if the officer commanding

horse artillery of a cavalry division does not know by intuition his divisional general's views, farewell to any idea of valuable combination between the two arms.

Heretofore this brotherhood of arms has not existed, nor has our organization aimed at effecting it.

Langlois in *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*, p. 140, puts this very tersely:

> Cavalry has need of the support of the other arms in strategical exploration.

And again:

> The English took no steps in peace to create and strengthen any union between the arms, and evil overtook them. I cannot insist too much on this point, and we (the French) must profit by the lesson.

A large number of horse artillery officers never have opportunities of working with cavalry. Our horse artillery batteries are too often quartered where such cannot be obtained. But even at places like Aldershot and the Curragh little can be done in this direction, the ground is too cramped and too well known, and there was always the necessity of a good classification at the practice camp haunting the mind of the battery commander, and making him grudge every moment not spent in the direction of attaining that most important item.

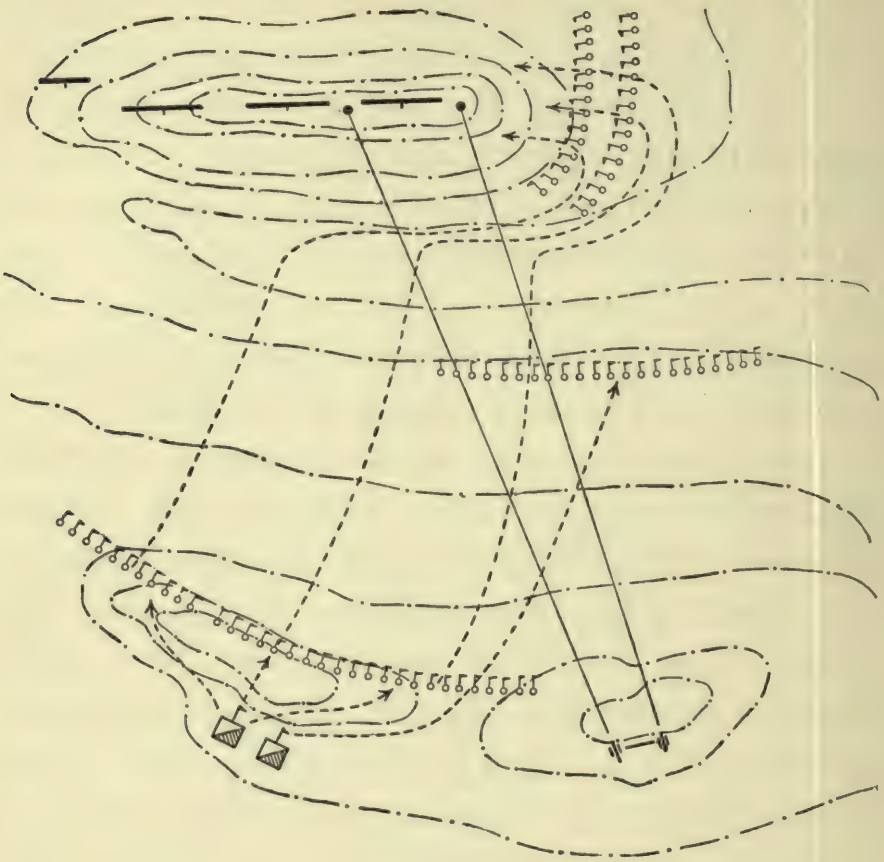
Unfortunately it is hard to find concrete examples of cavalry and horse artillery action. For good horse artillery and cavalry, trained to work in conjunction, on modern ideas, have never yet been seen on any battlefield in the latter part of the nine-

teenth century. In 1870? No. In South Africa? No. In Manchuria? A thousand times no. We have to go back to the days of Frederick and Napoleon.

In all cases where the army is on the defensive a great and potent factor is in the energy of the attack, or, as one might put it, in carrying through the whole according to prearrangement and "at one run," so that the gun and machine-gun fire is directed at that particular portion of the defence which can offer most opposition, and do most damage to the attack.

Let us take an instance of a cavalry attack on dismounted men holding an isolated kopje. Starting from 1200 yards' distance, and suddenly appearing over a ridge, one squadron of the attacking cavalry riding *en fourrageur*, supported by another squadron echeloned on the first squadron's flank, will probably reach the dead ground, which exists in the front of nearly every kopje, when within some 400 yards of the enemy's firing line; then their leader should give the order "Right turn," or "Left turn" (never "Right wheel" or "Left wheel" of troops, which would obviously cause them to afford a good mark), and gallop to one flank or the other. He should of course choose the weakest flank. (It may assist him in his decision if he remembers that, in a force rapidly taking up a position on a hill, the greater number of rifles will go to the right side, as they approach it, because there the hill will cover all but a small portion of their body and head as they shoot; but on the left side, unless left-handed, half the body will be shown.) See Diagram VIII.

Arrived at the flank, whilst the artillery and



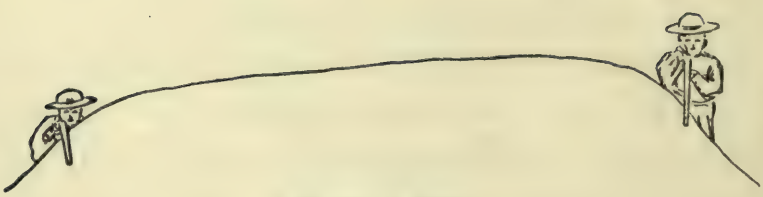


Diagram VIII.

machine guns of the attack shell that end of the ridge to be attacked from the moment the cavalry

leader makes his right or left turn, he halts and dismounts his men (that is, if the ground is unsuitable for mounted action), and sweeps the hill from end to end; the artillery, etc., now firing one hundred yards in front of his line of men. His other squadron should, meanwhile, "go for" the led horses. What time is at the defender's disposal if this attack is made suddenly? Frederick the Great used to say: "Rapidity is an element of particular importance in the tactical offensive; therefore the sharper attacks are, the fewer men they will cost."

Picture yourself on the ridge, where ten minutes before the enemy's cavalry have been reported as moving apparently away from or parallel to the defence. Your men have resumed their avocations; if they have been there some time, some will be cooking, others sleeping. Suddenly some unusually alert individual shouts out, "Hallo! the enemy are galloping straight at us." Men scramble to the sangars, or are waked up and hustled to their loopholes. They will not be ready to fire under a minute; this will bring the enemy's cavalry at a gallop over six hundred yards nearer. For two or three hundred yards the attackers will be exposed to magazine fire, but they are certainly not an easy mark, and few would fall, even on a rifle range. But at this moment during the twenty or thirty seconds which elapse before most of them will be in dead ground, a perfect inferno of shell and, still worse, machine-gun fire bursts on the ridge. Many men will now slightly shift their position in order to get more cover and

wait for the enemy to come straight on, nearer, where they can see him. But the attack does not come on; instead, it has slipped away to a flank, and the men's next thought will be for their led horses and so on. They are already beat.

This is no fancy picture of artillery and machine-gun support, but a method which was utilized a score of times in the latter part of the operations of 1899-1902 in South Africa by both cavalry and mounted colonials. It is one which can be made, where the artillery and machine guns are in cool, skilled hands, with comparative safety, but it is not one which the average cavalryman would care to make, supported by rifle fire, unless the latter can be brought up to six hundred or seven hundred yards' distance, where they can distinguish friend from foe.

Whilst by the above we attempt to show that horse artillery is a most valuable accessory to cavalry in the attack, we believe it is even more efficacious in retreat. An artillery officer sent in advance of the rearguard can select various positions from which horse artillery, practically covered from view, can put a few shells into the mass of the enemy's troops, as they pass some defile; or it may engage the hostile artillery in order to draw fire off the retreating cavalry, if the former exposes itself unduly. Meantime another section or battery is sent on, thus the action is taken up successively. In every case the ground should be selected so that it is (i.) possible to act in combination with the cavalry, and (ii.) withdraw without the enemy seeing the movement. Nor

must it be forgotten that the enemy may engage in the "parallel pursuit," consequently the wider the front shown by the force covering the retreat the better.

Thus it may happen that, following the rule that in a retreat the most mobile troops should be farthest out to the flanks, a cross fire may be brought by two sections on the enemy's pursuit. The drill regulations of German cavalry, 1909, impress the point

> . . . that, should the issue of the battle prove unfavourable, the cavalry must strain every nerve to facilitate the retreat of the other arms. It is in just such cases that they must assume a restless offensive. Repeated attacks on the flanks of pursuing troops will produce the best results.

In regard to the many other occasions on which horse artillery can assist cavalry they say:

> The horse artillery will often by its fire cause the foe to disclose his strength and thus help reconnaissance. In union with maxims it enables the opposition of the enemy in occupied positions and defiles to be overcome, and thus spares the cavalry a dismounted attack.
>
> Horse artillery and machine guns enable the cavalry to hem in at long range the enemy's marching columns, to cause these to partially deploy through flank fire to change the direction of their march.

Horse artillery is the one thing that prevents an enemy sitting still and thus preventing the cavalry factor of mobility asserting itself.

CHAPTER XI

CO-OPERATION OF HORSE ARTILLERY WITH CAVALRY IN THE GENERAL ENGAGEMENT

"Cavalry has more need of artillery than infantry, because it cannot reply to fire, but can fight only with the steel."—NAPOLEON.

OF close co-operation by the horse artillery in the charges of cavalry against infantry there is practically little or no trace in the battles of 1870. The training of cavalry and horse artillery and the organization of the cavalry division had not proceeded on these lines, as is evident from the fact that there is no mention of it in books such as Von Schmidt before that war, or in Prince Kraft's *Letters on Cavalry* after it. The latter writer shows that the tendency was to deprive the cavalry division of its horse artillery when a battle took place, and put it with the corps artillery. It was claimed that by so doing the horse artillery were practically of double use.

The batteries remain as a rule with the corps artillery. If the cavalry division is sent forward, they are attached to it. If a battle takes place during which the cavalry division is held in reserve, then the horse artillery becomes again a part of the corps artillery and considerably augments its fire. The horse artillery of the Guards corps was thus employed in 1870.

For a cavalry division which takes part in a great battle *does not require any horse artillery.* It is held at first in reserve.

If it is called upon to attack it is obliged to make use of an opportunity of charging broken troops of the enemy. There is thus no need to break up its enemy with artillery fire, and there is, besides, no time to do so.

Compare with the above the 1907 amendments to the German *Exerzier Reglement für die Kavallerie 1895*, No. 375 :

In a general engagement the batteries and machine guns told off to the cavalry *will remain with them,* because they are indispensable to the cavalry in the fulfilment of their special duties during, and particularly after, the battle.

The cavalry leader must, however, judge whether the general position does not rather demand the employment of his batteries in co-operation with the rest of the artillery. The horse artillery and machine guns will be of the greatest use in a general engagement when the cavalry are operating against the enemy's flanks and rear. Their sudden appearance from a flank or from the rear is certain to produce a strong moral effect on the enemy.

There could scarcely be a greater *volte face* than is indicated by these two extracts.

Further, what we read of the use of masses of cavalry at the present date, in both the German and French manœuvres, leads us to the conclusion that their cavalry and horse artillery will be kept together in a general engagement and used for the sledge-hammer blow on both shaken and unshaken infantry.

The reader should study some of the instances given in Colonel Maude's book, *Cavalry: Its Past and Future,* chaps. xi. and xii., of the charges by cavalry on infantry in the 1870 war, and picture to himself what would have been the results if these charges had been preluded by even five minutes' gun fire of one battery of modern horse artillery, say 350 accurately placed shells, containing in all 83,600 projectiles.

A conclusion early arrived at in the consideration of the rôle of the three arms on the modern battle-field is that no artillery and infantry force, however strong, can afford to enter upon a battle unless their flanks are protected by natural obstacles or by masses of cavalry. But battles, except where we adopt the defensive, are not fought where natural obstacles cover our flank. Therefore, we must have sufficient cavalry if only to neutralize the enemy's cavalry, otherwise they will work round our flank and attack our reserves, and, if they are accompanied by horse artillery, whilst our horse and field artillery is already engaged in the great battle, they possess a marked advantage over us.

The latest instance of the need of cavalry and horse artillery is furnished by Captain Spaits, who himself went through the retreat with the Russians after Mukden, in his book, *With Cossacks through Manchuria.*

He "and many others who realized the panic-stricken frame of mind of the masses of men who were pouring back without arms and without

discipline" are of opinion that a "couple of good cavalry divisions, energetically led and provided with artillery and machine guns, could have turned the retreat into a complete annihilation of the army."

The above inference is obvious when one considers the impression made on the flying troops by a few hundred indifferent horsemen.[1]

Having, it is hoped, to the reader's satisfaction, demonstrated that cavalry with horse artillery have a great rôle on the battlefield against infantry, if (i.) the conditions are favourable, (ii.) the attack is *à propos*, and (iii.) properly supported by horse artillery and machine-gun fire, we turn to the form which the attack against infantry should take. *Cavalry Training* indicates that it should be made in a succession of lines; and it may be added that it is of the highest importance that these attacks should not be made without sufficient preliminary reconnaissance on the part of the cavalry leader accompanied by the commander of his artillery, and that subsequently the action of the infantry should be decided upon in conjunction with the infantry commander in that portion of the field.

That the infantry should not stand open-mouthed, but should press in at the right moment, is of the highest importance. As far as the troops are concerned, the formation is a simple one; but there are two points which demand forethought and arrangement. The first is the best position for

[1] Extract from Von Pelet Narbonne's *Lectures on and Cavalry Lessons from the Manchurian War.*

the supporting fire; the second is the rallying-point. In these circumstances it appears best to have in one's mind an ideal, as a guide, and endeavour in the actual fight to approximate to it—and we may turn to the memoirs of Napoleon for the solution. He says: "A flanking battery which strikes and rakes the enemy obliquely is capable of deciding victory in itself."

The ideal then appears to be: "A," when the fire effect is delivered at right angles to the direction of the successive lines of cavalry; and "B," when the rallying-point is fixed on the flank away from the general engagement and under cover from the enemy's fire; "C," when we utilize surprise. It is usually in the return from such enterprises after rallying that nine-tenths of the loss takes place. A good instance is that of Michel's brigade at the battle of Woerth; see page 203, Maude's *Cavalry: Its Past and Future.*

Suddenly the wreck of the ten squadrons of Michel's Brigade, now making the best of their way back at full speed, but still preserving some attempt at formation, appeared right in rear of the Prussians. The latter at once wheeled troops about and charged at full gallop from the halt. Owing to the suddenness of the attack there was no time to deploy, though the outer troops attempted to gallop up into line; but the shock was sufficient to discomfort the French. There was a short mêlée, and then the Prussians, promptly rallying, swept up the debris of the French, and brought in some sixty prisoners and many riderless horses. The prompt resolution to attack and the rapid rally both deserve very high commendation.

Many writers of recent date, and especially those who are impressed with an exaggerated idea of the accuracy of rifle fire, those, in fact, of the De Bloch School, are under the impression that cavalry will not charge infantry. It is probable that, never having ridden in a force of cavalry passing through a fire-swept zone, they are unaware how much simpler it is than the attack on cavalry or artillery, and how much less resolution is needed.

In the case of cavalry there is the apparently inevitable concussion which is seen to be nearing; in the former a few men or horses drop almost unnoticed by their comrades, but most of them "carry on" for a long way after being hit. As the enemy are reached, the desire for slaughter overrides all other thoughts; cavalry should then be taught to go straight on, taking with the point what comes to them and riding their horses at speed in the direction of the rallying-point.

An example of the "counter-attack by a cavalry division on hostile infantry in order to gain time for reserves to come up" is given in General Sir D. Haig's *2nd Cavalry Staff Ride*, p. 40:

> The problem here presented is one of considerably more danger and difficulty than that of completing the rout of beaten troops and reaping the fruits of victory. The enemy's infantry, far from having lost their *moral*, are pressing victoriously to the attack, and, though the leading echelons may have sustained heavy losses from the fire of the defence, there are troops in reserve and support which retain their cohesion and steadiness. The responsibility for

ordering an attack of this nature . . . rests with the commander-in-chief. Against such an objective it is useless to send regiments at the gallop. It is necessary to (1) prepare the attack, concentrate the means for it, and bring a converging fire of guns, machine guns, and infantry upon the objective; (2) make a definite plan. This must be based on what can be seen of the enemy and his position, the use of ground, the most opportune moment; (3) dispose the troops methodically by the execution of the plan, and assign to them, if possible, their objectives; (4) give the signal for the attack at the right moment.

In the *Manual of Infantry Training*, 1905, under "Formations Applicable to Savage Warfare," is found S. No. 118, which contains an instruction for "Meeting an Attack by Cavalry or Swordsmen."

When a battalion in line is threatened by cavalry or swordsmen in force, it may sometimes be desirable to dress back the threatened flank and to dress up the unmenaced flank, the battalion commander giving the command, "Back, No. ——, up, No. ——."

Such a formation if adopted in ordinary warfare against cavalry would favour the fire of artillery and machine guns, if the latter are placed at right angles to the attack as indicated above.

May, writing in 1896, *Guns and Cavalry*, says:

True, there may be opportunities when cavalry and horse artillery moving rapidly, even during the progress of a great battle, may anticipate the foe at some decisive point, and may make or prevent a telling flank movement. But for such occasions special arrangements could no doubt be

made as the exigencies of the moment might dictate, and we need not legislate for them beforehand.

It is evident from the German regulations quoted above that they have no intention of trusting to the "Special arrangements" for "Exigencies."

Their reasons no doubt are somewhat as follows:

1st. Horse artillery is an integral part of the cavalry.

2nd. Attacks on unshaken infantry depend upon horse artillery for such a preparation as will speedily reduce infantry to shaken infantry.

3rd. In order to get freedom of manœuvre for our squadrons to a flank, cavalry are bound to meet an enemy's cavalry force, possibly belonging to an enemy whose cavalry does not leave its horse artillery behind with the corps artillery in a great general engagement.

On which side wins will depend the subsequent course of events on that flank.

4th. A cavalry force of three regiments and one battery of horse artillery is quite equal, or more than equal, to one of four regiments without horse artillery.

Having in view the above consideration, cavalry should not be prepared to forgo their horse artillery in a great general engagement, since it foredooms them to the inaction of the French and German cavalry divisions of the war of 1870, or perhaps to their comparative failure and losses, when, unsupported by horse artillery fire, they attacked infantry columns to cover the retreat of their own infantry.

Special arrangements of this kind are not made, and we know also, too well, that "No man can serve two masters."

The latest German regulations appear, therefore, to have been formulated on sound reasoning.

CHAPTER XII

HORSE ARTILLERY FIRE EFFECT COMPARED WITH RIFLE FIRE

HENDERSON in *Science of War*, written in 1893-1902, asked the question, whether the necessary fire power should be found by the cavalry itself or by a body of mounted riflemen attached to the brigade or the division? and answered it by proposing trained mounted infantry. To the view that this fire power had better be supplied by the horse artillery he gives little or no consideration. Machine guns are also more or less ignored, and yet these in common with horse artillery are what the *cavalry attack* requires most in support.

Those who have frequently had to rely on fire to cover a mounted advance will agree that the fire of two hundred riflemen at eight rounds a minute for five minutes is not to be compared in efficacy with the shells of a Q.F. horse artillery battery. Their comparative value would work out in projectiles as follows:

Guns.		Rounds.		Bullets.		Minutes.	Bullets.
6	×	10	×	236	×	5	= 70,800.
Rifles.		**Rounds.**				**Minutes.**	**Bullets.**
200	×	8		...	×	5	= 8000.

That is, the riflemen fire less than $\frac{1}{8}$ of the number of projectiles fired by a battery, or 1770 riflemen shoot as many projectiles as a battery in five minutes.

It is superfluous to remark on the range attained by the Q.F. gun compared with the rifle, but it is to the point to bring to notice that a Q.F. battery is controlled by one individual who is furnished with good glasses, and that the guns have telescopic sights. At a mile he will distinguish his own side. Again the battery's front is 100 yards compared to the mile of front required by 1770 riflemen. The battery is in action within one minute and thirty seconds, whereas from the time the order is given a brigade of mounted riflemen will not be in action under five minutes at least, and will not be shooting with any degree of accuracy under eight minutes. Further, the fire of a big line of one mile in length cannot be directed, whereas a battery can be switched on and off, or so many degrees to a flank, and so on, by a simple command.

It is obvious, then, that in the attack of infantry, whether unshaken or shaken, the extended line of charging cavalry will find their most reliable support in horse artillery and machine-gun fire and not in the fire of dismounted men.

Henderson would therefore appear to have written at this time under the influence of the then accepted theory that the horse artillery would not be available to assist cavalry in a general engagement. He was also much impressed by the view that mounted infantry

should supply the fire power for cavalry and prevent cavalry having recourse to fire action as much as possible; since he considered that the *élan* of the cavalryman would soon disappear, if once accustomed to dismount and fire as an alternative to shock action when the latter was feasible.

To sum up, present-day opinion is not in favour of mounted infantry being attached to cavalry brigades, but on the other hand horse artillery and machine guns will remain with cavalry in the general engagement, ready for any opportunity.

In order once more to emphasize the opinion that these charges of cavalry on infantry demand exceptional arrangements on the part of the general commanding the cavalry and his artillery commander, the case quoted by Prince Kraft in *Letters on Cavalry*, page 64, may be cited. Speaking of a French cavalry charge on Prussian infantry at Woerth, a Prussian infantry officer told him that:

> At the moment our infantry were falling back down a slope from an attack which had failed, a hail of Chassepot and Mitrailleuse bullets followed them, and every one felt that he would never reach the cover of the wood which lay below them.
>
> Tired to death and resigned to their fate, the whole of the infantry were slowly crawling towards the wood. Suddenly the murderous fire ceased. Every one stopped, astonished, to see what had saved them from the fate which seemed certain to them. Then they saw the French cuirassiers who, as they pushed forward, *masked the fire* of their infantry and artillery. These cuirassiers appeared

to them like guardian angels. With the most perfect calm every man halted on the spot where he stood and fired at the cuirassiers, who were soon swept away by the rapid fire.

He adds at p. 67 :

We see, moreover, that cavalry charges, if they break out from the front of their own infantry and *mask the fire of the latter*, enable the infantry which is charged to gain time, owing to the cessation of this fire, to recover their formation.

The above is one more argument in favour of constantly training our cavalry leaders till it is a second nature to apply shock at right angles to fire effect, and on no account whatever to mask the fire of their own artillery and infantry, and thus become the "guardian angels" of the infantry whom they are attacking.

Von Bernardi appears to lose sight of this, when he says, p. 208, *Cavalry in Peace and War*:

It is obvious that not only the preliminary deployment, but the formation, for the attack, must take place beyond the effective range of the enemy's fire . . . and nothing else can be done but to gallop straight to the front. As, however, our infantry will have to be ridden through in the charge, it is impossible in such a case to attack in close order.

This is what we consider should be avoided in the dispositions of the cavalry leader.

Again, p. 200, Von Bernardi says: "The attack will best take place from the flank." To this there is the objection that there is not likely to be a

good rallying-point in the middle of the enemy's line.

Our conclusion is that these attacks will be least costly if they break out from our line in valleys running at right angles to it, or round the contour of a hill, and sweep the enemy by a charge parallel to our front, and that the rallying-point should be outside the flank or within our own line.

On the occasions when our infantry or dismounted riflemen made one of their regular attacks in extended order on the positions taken up by the Boers, there were almost invariably not only critical moments, but also opportunities afforded by the lie of the ground which invited a leader at the head of three or four squadrons of lancers to issue from cover in or near the Boer lines at a gallop in open order, and to sweep over the widely extended men. Three to four minutes at most would have covered the time during which these lancers would have been exposed to fire; then they could have reached a rallying-point in their own lines.

There are good grounds for the belief that such an attack is extremely demoralizing, especially if the troops have not been accustomed in peace-time to undergo it.

CHAPTER XIII

IN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY

"The most arduous, while at the same time the most important, duties that devolve upon soldiers in the field are those of outposts . . . all concerned should feel that the safety of the army and the honour of the country depend upon their untiring vigilance and activity."—LORD WOLSELEY.

THE art of maintaining himself and his command in the outpost line is a question of vigilance, imagination, and forethought on the part of the commander, and cunning on the part of his men. Let us place ourselves in the position of an officer commanding a hundred to two hundred men, and detached some ten miles out to the flank and front of a force.

The commander must take it for granted that he may be attacked at any moment, and so he must run through in his mind what he intends to do. It is his business to look ahead and foresee dangers and misfortunes—and by his preparations to rob them of their bad effect.[1] If he has left his bivouac a couple of hours before dawn and moved, carefully feeling his way, in the direction of the enemy, and

[1] A general-in-chief should ask himself frequently in the day, What should I do if the enemy's army appeared now in my front, or on my right, or on my left? If he have any difficulty in answering these questions, he is ill-posted and should seek to remedy it.—Napoleon's Maxims, No. 8.

has perhaps driven in one of their outposts, he need not feel it incumbent on him to hold the ground gained *à outrance*. He has seen into their outpost line, gained certain information, and come to certain conclusions; therefore when the enemy attack him, as they certainly will do, he should have made all preparations to fall back to the bit of good ground previously selected, where he can see and where his movements cannot be seen. Here he can make a good show, and ten to one they will let him stay there. But instead of staying there with 100 men all day, which would fatigue his men and horses without result, he places some Cossack posts and a small picket or two and retires all the rest of his men, without the enemy's knowledge, to his bivouac, and is at breakfast by 9 or 10 A.M., his horses watered and fed. At 4 P.M. he canters out to his posts, spends the remaining daylight in observation of the enemy's movements, relief of posts, etc., and withdraws his Cossack posts and picket at dark, leaving the picket fires well stoked up; one or two men only are left to feed these fires at intervals through the night. His real line of night outposts is placed on the possible lines of advance to his bivouac. But if his bivouac can be observed, or is likely to be reported upon to the enemy, he may change it after dark. His men should have been practised so constantly in alarm posts at night that they know exactly where to go, and what to do in case of a night alarm, and how to do so in absolute silence. Only the C.O. may make a few uncomplimentary remarks about the enemy in

a stentorian voice, and invite them to "come on," which goes far to cool the ardour of a night attack and hearten up his own men.

Next morning up again at two hours before dawn by the sound of a long-drawn-out whistle, upsaddle and off again, and get into your outpost line before dawn or, if preferred, take up a fresh line.

During the day there is plenty to do, but it is well to have an hour or so during which the men get a sleep; though with most men, after a time, it becomes a habit to sleep whenever they have nothing to do or think about, and, if they go to sleep directly it is dark, and do not sit up and talk, they get enough sleep, and are alert before dawn. All talking should be stopped a quarter of an hour after dark in every part of the lines.

The men soon learn the routine, and know how to take care of themselves, sleeping, bathing, washing, and feeding when they get a chance, and forming into small messes of four or five, who co-operate in all their food, messing, and fuel arrangements. In a very short time everything begins to go smoothly. The kits are packed, horses saddled, waggons inspanned, and coffee drunk in twenty minutes to half an hour (considerably less if there is an alarm) from the time the men are roused, whether in the dark or not. It is only when they have attained a fair degree of celerity that their C.O. can feel any confidence in them in the outpost line.

The officers, except the quarter-master and adjutant, must attend every stable hour, see the

horses finished before the men leave stables, and one officer per squadron must also go to water. One glance is enough to tell an experienced eye if all is right with a horse or not. They cannot speak, but they are very full of expression if anything is wrong. The good troop and squadron leader is for ever solicitous about his horses, and woe betide the unlucky stable-guard whom he catches resting his back against a bale of hay when there is a horse loose. Once it is understood that each man stands or falls in the squadron leader's estimation, and is noted for punishment or a light reprimand when brought up before him, according to the care of his horse, everything will go well. Nothing less will make some of them always keep up to the mark.

Nor must you forget the magpie instinct in some men, which leads them to collect all sorts of rubbish and carry it on their horses. So, on some favourable occasion on the march, halt near a deep river or pond, hold a kit and saddlery inspection, and hurl far into the water all unauthorized articles. Let the leader set the example himself of walking and leading his horse a great deal, especially down hills, when the loaded saddle slips forward on to the shoulder-blades. This is the merest routine, but a hundred things will occupy the C.O.'s mind. First, forage and water in plenty for his horses. Second, food and firing for his men. It is essential to keep the men well fed, dry,[1] if possible, and that they

[1] In continuous heavy rain one tent should be made into a "drying" tent by putting a fire on a stone fireplace in it, and thus bringing the heat

should always have their coffee and tea, and in trying times their glass of rum twice a week or so. Soap and tobacco are the other main essentials. If you can give them half their ration in flour and half in biscuit, it will preserve their health. There are at least twenty reasons why, if you requisition anything, you should never permit the slightest waste or prodigality. De Brack says truly: "In peace wastefulness is a wrong; in war it is a crime." Always see a receipt is given in due form.

Detached, or in the outpost line, you are more likely to get shelter in rainy weather for your horses and men than in a big camp. Take advantage of this, but recollect that it entails extra vigilance as a rule in your outposts, and that to get out of a farm and into a fighting formation requires forethought, pre-arrangement, and test practice, and usually entails the improvement of existing exits, and the blocking of all approaches, etc.

One of the rules, in all contact with the enemy, is always to do the opposite to what you appear to him to be about to do, *e.g.* never go straight to the point for which you are really making. Never come straight back to your support. Mystify him as much as you can. Never do the same thing two days running. Always come back from a patrol by a different way from that by which you went out. When alone go across country rather than on the tracks. Patrols should go across open country in

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up to 120°, to 130°, or more. The wettest clothes hung up in it will dry in about twenty minutes.

the dark and be in observation and concealed before dawn. Cunning rather than audacity is required, and should be rewarded when it has good results.

Scouts have a hard time, and it is most important to have relays of them and not to let them go out too many nights running. They must also learn to put up with or remain impervious to that foolish and abominable remark of Tommy Knowall, the young and inexperienced staff or intelligence officer: "WE knew all that before." If chased in by superior numbers, double as a buck or fox does directly you are out of sight.

If you are scouting near the enemy's lines do not take cover on your side of rocks, bushes, etc., but on theirs, and turn your horses and pretend to look back at your own side. They will hesitate to fire on you at 700 yards or upwards, as they will think you are their own scouts riding in. But never permit a party of your own scouts to ride in to your line without sending one of their number to gallop on and tell you who they are. A shot "across the bows" of one of your own parties which is coming into a line of videttes or bivouac, without taking this precaution, will soon teach them all to do so. *À propos* of this, "punishments should fit the crime," they are more easily remembered; after all, punishments are for the prevention of similar conduct in others and not retaliatory.

A high standard of conduct, zeal, and bravery comes from the example set in the first few encounters of coolness and light-heartedness. A

C.O. whose men were under a wearing fire was sent a message by a troop leader, who did not quite enjoy the situation, asking, "What shall I do?" The reply was, "Give your men the second lecture on musketry."

No one likes to be out of the fashion, and it is desirable to lay stress on not coming off second best to the enemy; to give him more than you get; to make him pay for his audacity heavily, and so on. To do so distracts the men's minds from your own losses in dead or wounded men, etc., of which you must make little.[1] Much mourning for the dead makes men sorry for themselves too, and has a bad effect. Shakespeare tells us:

> Wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss,
> But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
>
> (3 *Henry VI.* v. 4.)

Deceiving the enemy by ruses, and killing or taking him prisoner, is very desirable, and plans for doing so should be thought over and deliberately carried out. Henderson, *Science of War*, p. 101, says:

> To sustain the *moral* of his own men; to break down the *moral* of his enemy—these are the great objects which, if he be ambitious of success, the leader must always keep in view.

Shaikh Sadi says:

> If thou art harsh the foe will fight shy of thee; if thou art lenient they will be audacious and forward.

If the force to which you belong suffers reverses

[1] Blücher on one occasion shouted to a tottering regiment: "You scoundrels, do you then want to live for ever?"

early in the war, "traitors," "spies," etc., are words which one may hear, and they will be applied ungenerously, indiscriminately, and invariably wrongly. Any talk of this sort should be sternly repressed; it is due to a craven desire to blame others for their own cowardice, which some men, curs and runaways themselves, are base enough to indulge in. This will certainly not help them to be brave on future occasions, whilst it serves to disintegrate a force. It will be found that on those men who are practised frequently in going up to the enemy's pickets before dawn, and retiring gradually, there is not, even in a severe retreat, the same bad moral effect which there is on unpractised men.

A very important point to impress on your men is the following. No horseman should believe that he cannot escape capture, or that a bullet will hit him. Let it be clearly understood by all that, as the saying goes, "A horseman and a heavy shower of rain can get through anything." Snap-shots fired by men in haste, or when excited, never do hit any one who is mounted and moving, especially if the firer is being "peppered" himself. A very good reason this for arranging for covering fire, if only by one rifle, when riding up to ground likely to be held by the enemy's pickets. Another point to be remembered by scouts is that when they get into the dead ground, which is almost always to be found in front of a hill, they should always change both their pace and direction, and arrive at the top of the hill both sooner and at a different point from where they might be reasonably

expected to arrive. Again, scouts in their advance should invariably look out for an alternative line of retreat, especially if they cross an obstacle such as a brook, ditch, or strong fence. They should not expect to see the enemy's picket or videttes if they deliberately dismount in view and look for them. But if they ride back over a hill, disappear, and then creep back at another point, they are pretty sure to see some heads coming up.

In all the arrangements to be made for sending out scouts, never neglect the value of darkness for getting near the enemy's lines, or through their line of pickets. What can be done with ease then, is impossible in daytime for the cleverest scout in the world, and it is foolish and unfair to scouts to ask them to do this; in fact, it is seldom asked for except by officers unacquainted with their business. All who have attempted to shoot big game, even in a fair moonlight, are aware how uncertain their aim is then. Consequently, if a scout stumbles on a sentry or picket at night, it is twenty chances to one that he gets off without a bullet in him. This fact it is well to remember when posting your own pickets, whom you should protect from being rushed by wires and ropes stretched a foot from the ground, some ten yards or so from their post, rather than trust to their rifle fire, for the "bullet is a fool."

As will be seen from the above, pickets, Cossack posts, and observing parties should be in position, halted and invisible to the enemy before dawn, and should not, as a rule, be withdrawn till dusk covers

them from the enemy's observation. It seems puerile to urge these obviously common-sense precautions, and they would be omitted were it not that experience shows that they are most studiously neglected by our regular and irregular troops till bitter experience teaches their necessity.[1]

Sniping by nervous sentries, which will always take place the first few nights on which untrained or unseasoned troops are, or think they are, in contact with the enemy (note the Dogger Bank episode with Rozhestvenski's fleet), must, and can be, at once firmly put a stop to. To do so, give orders that the C.O., adjutant, and regimental sergeant-major of the corps, in whose section of outposts it occurs, are at once to go and spend a couple of hours in the outposts, and then on their return to report whether "all is quiet in the outpost line."

Young men, especially, are apt to get "rattled" when "on sentry go," and to imagine small bushes and so on are the enemy's scouts. Even fireflies are known to have been mistaken for the enemy's lanterns and subjected to a heavy fire. When the fire had ceased, and it became evident that they *were* fireflies and not the enemy with lanterns, the commander of the picket was much annoyed at receiving an order to "Push in now and kill the remainder with the bayonet." Sentries had far better rouse the rest of the group quietly in case of the

[1] Napoleon considered it necessary, in 1807, to write to Lasalle as follows: "Be very careful to send out frequent reconnoitring parties, but do not let them go out each day by the same way and at the same time, and return in similar fashion, *so that what happened to you at Wischau occurs again*"!

enemy really being on the move towards their picket, and then all may fire a volley at "point blank" range only.

It is frequently desirable to impress the enemy with a mistaken estimate of your strength. This might be done by sending a detachment out some hours before dawn towards your base, then before it is light they turn round and march in to your bivouac in full daylight and in sight of the enemy as reinforcements.

There are obviously many plans by which an enemy can be deceived as to the strength of your force, if you can work behind cover, by first showing a number of men in one place and then in another. It is well to remember that even if an enemy sees you acting with duplicity the effect is by no means a bad one, as next time he sees you moving in your real direction he may think the action is for his benefit, and covers a movement from an entirely different direction.

In the outposts a knowledge of strategy and battle tactics is most necessary, and every officer should try to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the terrain, geography, and strategical issues of the campaign, otherwise he may miss great chances, and his extracts from the information, which he will get first of all, may be valueless instead of being such as will bring him to the favourable notice of his superiors. Nor should his superiors forget the late Admiral Makarov's opinion, that "a sub-lieutenant acting intelligently and sensibly was more useful to the

state than a flag officer who was carrying out to the letter an order which he did not clearly understand."

In regard to terrain, if, as is most probable, the map is on a very small scale, the general direction of the watershed is one of the best general helps in finding the way.

It is absolutely necessary for any cavalry scout moving at night to know enough of the stars to orient himself and to guess correctly the time. British troops serve in so many parts of the world that no special instructions can be given, but Orion is one of the constellations which may prove useful, and which is quite unmistakable.

To establish a system by which you "picket the enemy," which may be defined as placing observers round him so that he can make no movement without your knowledge, is the acme of good work in the outpost line: it is almost a counsel of perfection. But there are two points which deserve consideration in this connection: the first is that the mounted men whom you employ for this purpose must know, or have time to learn, the country thoroughly; and the second is that, however thoroughly you may imagine that you have picketed the enemy, he will be able to move out of his environment at night, and if your safety is based on knowledge of his movements he will, as likely as not, upset your calculations. This deduction is drawn from facts. The Boers habitually picketed our garrison towns and columns, but our columns, taking the ordinary precautions of moving by night and off the main tracks or roads, con-

stantly surprised and captured their laagers of waggons. The "desultory operations for two or three years in South Africa," 1899-1902, contain no unusual circumstances, we are told, but one is tempted to consider whether the outpost system evolved out of their own consciousness by the Boers was not better than that so laboriously studied by us in former days at Sandhurst. Our system was almost entirely directed towards "security," and largely neglected "information." Theirs studied information of the enemy first, a desire for security being a secondary consideration.[1]

As regards a service of information, certainly an idea of using contact squadrons had long been known and considered by us. Had we not long ago read the fascinating account of Curély's adventures in De Brack, and also the "Conduct of a Contact Squadron," translated from the German? But it soon became evident in South Africa that it was not very easy to carry out; every native was of assistance to the Boers, and afraid to serve us, even if we understood their language and could interrogate them. In this respect the Russians in Manchuria were almost similarly handicapped. It will usually be the same in war; one side can go anywhere, the other finds every man's hand against it. Under these circumstances, to lay down one law for both sides is obviously folly. Every report on the Peninsular War shows the extent to which the French were

[1] The French cavalry regulations state that between the service of *sûreté* and exploration in the cases of small forces ill-provided with cavalry, the line is not drawn so clearly as in the case of large forces with their normal establishment of cavalry.—*Service de la cavalerie en campagne*, p. 58.

handicapped by the guerrillas, and how our troops were assisted.

De Brack and many other writers make it plain that whilst from 1805 up to, perhaps, 1812 information was easily gained by the French cavalry for Napoleon, later a complete change came over the scene, and the Cossacks, overrunning the country, picketed the French columns. Perhaps the natives were weary of French exactions, but in any case the result is said to have been that "the genius of the Emperor was paralysed by the activity of the Cossacks."

We have at least four or five instances where one side's light cavalry or guerrillas "paralysed the genius" of the other's generals by gaining superiority in the outposts, or, rather, anywhere outside their opponent's outposts: (*a*) in 1812, 1813, 1814; (*b*) in the Peninsular War; (*c*) in the early part of the American Civil War; (*d*) in the South African War; and (*e*) in the Manchurian War.

With these examples before us it must become a serious factor in taking thought for a campaign, how far the cavalry will be able to effect this. Our training must be such as to enable us to play this part, of picketing the enemy, if possible; certainly we should do so in a friendly country.[1] We know it is usually

[1] Wrangel, in *Cavalry in the Japanese War*, puts tersely the true line to take:—"The idea of a thin cavalry screen surrounding their own army for protection against view of the enemy is very fallacious. An energetic enemy, full of enterprise, will easily pierce this thin web with his scouts. Only an active screen can be of any use, which really in practice is no longer a screen only, but is coincident with the true offensive reconnaissance. He who advances regardlessly into the hostile reconnaissance zone, and attacks the

only done by the side which has a knowledge of the country; but may not the almost universal knowledge of map-reading in the cavalry and a good supply of maps obviate this? But let us remember above all things that nothing will be done in war which has not by constant practice become a second nature in peace. Let us then practise not only our officers, but our men, in picketing every large body of troops which train within fifty miles of us.

Often C.O.'s, shortsightedly we think, do not welcome the attention of cavalry thus picketing them; but even if this is the case, it may still be practised by our cavalry, but in a way which does not draw attention to the fact—the training will be none the worse, and (though perhaps hardly in this sense) the "offensive spirit" must be second nature to us.[1]

The instruction of cavalry in outpost work is difficult, because in the first place many parts of the duty make great demands on the instructor's imagination, powers of explanation, and what we may call ability for stage management.

In teaching recruits, it is far better, instead of saying "You will imagine the enemy are in that

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cavalry detachments of the enemy with determination wherever they are found, gives the death-blow to the information apparatus of the enemy. His patrols and detachments robbed of these supports are soon useless. They, like their reports, only in the fewest cases are able to reach their destination."

[1] A regulation in the French army is as follows: "One of the most important missions on which young officers should be sent is the conduct of reconnaissance of discovery. Opportunity should be taken to give them practice in this, by sending them to reconnoitre the movement of troops of another garrison. These exercises where the officer stays out for two or three days at the head of his troop are extremely useful.—*Service de la cavalerie*, p. 190.

direction," to say, "Those red flags carried by horsemen, or those men in the white caps *are* the enemy." Further, the parties carrying the red flags should, in order to show that they are enemies, take some action, such as to come within about 800 to 600 yards, and shoot with blank at the parties of recruits, retiring when the latter return the fire, etc., etc. Beginning from this point the recruit may be asked by the instructor how they would suggest that the duties of a vedette, or, better, "look-out man"[1] should be carried out, and he will then gradually impart to them the accepted mode of outpost duty, which is, after all is said and done, only common sense. For it is certain that, under active service conditions, men learn very quickly by their own mother-wit in real dangers and difficulties what precautions are necessary. These services are consequently ill taught by theoretical instruction in the barrack-room, and well taught if the work is done from the start in the open, and, for choice, in unknown ground and with a represented enemy. The ground also must be changed constantly, and this, certainly in the United Kingdom, is difficult, and makes considerable demands on horse-flesh and on the instructor's time. But it is the one thing for which horse-flesh must not be grudged, even though the work is thankless from the point of view of immediate reward or recognition, for it is work which presents more difficulties in regard to inspection than any other; consequently, a careful instructor gets little or no credit for his work till war

[1] Plain English words should always be used, if possible, in instruction.

begins. It is only then that the immense difference between the cavalry or infantry, who are well grounded and thoroughly honest in their outpost work and those who are not so, comes to light in so-called "regrettable incidents."

A cunning enemy will soon discriminate between those who do their outpost work well and those who do it carelessly, and will attack the latter. It may be of interest to state that a very close union soon grows up between regiments of cavalry and infantry in a column, where there is a mutual recognition of honest work in the outposts, whilst there is a wholesome detestation for slack regiments. A most important point is to train men in the duty of night outposts, whilst the subordinate leaders should have it dinned into their minds that there is always a definite point beyond which no one is to retire. It has been very truly said that sentries always think of retiring on groups, groups on pickets, pickets on supports, and supports on reserves, with the result that the enemy is in camp before you know where you are.

The training of regiments in the duties of outpost work cannot be carried out really satisfactorily and thoroughly unless the regiment goes into camp for a few days. Otherwise, many of the real difficulties, such as the cooking and supplies of food, the off-saddling, watering, reliefs of sentries and pickets, lighting of fires, arrangements for men to get a good sleep, are never grasped.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME DETACHED DUTIES

DESPATCH-RIDING

One often hears a party of cavalrymen employed on reconnoitring work blamed because they continue to observe or follow up the enemy, whom they have just discovered, without a thought of conveying the information to those who sent them out. But this forgetfulness is not to be wondered at when we call to mind that in the first few weeks of the 1870 war German officers were sent on long rides of 60 or 70 miles, whilst little or no arrangement was made for the purpose of transmitting the information, obtained at great risk and trouble. It leads one to think that the subject of despatch-riding is one of those points connected with war of which the knowledge lapses or rusts in peace-time, or, like the manufacture of Waterford glass, becomes a lost art.

To begin with, to train men in the duties of despatch-riding with anything like thoroughness entails a certain amount of prearrangement for food, forage, and shelter for men and horses; for it cannot be taught in the immediate vicinity of the town where the men are quartered. In war it may entail

cross-country work, if capture is to be avoided; whilst the task on roads can often be carried out much better by cyclists. It is suggested that this little-practised art, despatch-riding, may be made to take a form which will serve an excellent purpose in the general instruction of the cavalryman. By it he will learn (1) to take notice of the country passed through; (2) to see a good reason for the trouble now taken to instruct him in map-reading; (3) to gain immensely in self-reliance; (4) to become an expert in campaigning horse-management; (5) to gain knowledge of pace.

In regard to the last point, pace, it may be interesting to give some particulars of a despatch-riding scheme. In this exercise a series of despatches were sent from the east to the west of Ireland, 120 miles as the crow flies and about 135 by road, under the following circumstances:—About eighty cavalry-men under two years' service and two subalterns were billeted along a certain route. The base of this route was shifted north or south after a few days, causing the greater part of the line to be altered. Two messages per diem were sent off at uncertain hours of day or night, and were carried on from post to post without intermission. The men were provided with maps at 4 miles to the inch. Three regiments furnished the above detachment for this work in three successive fortnights. The first regiment brought or took the despatches through on the average in twenty-eight hours; the second regiment in twenty-four hours; the third regiment in twenty-two hours. The pace was

not to exceed the walk and trot. The roads were in fair condition.

When instruction in despatch-riding takes place, it is of considerable importance to shift the line to one flank or another after a few days. This may have to be done at any time in an unfriendly country, and, though it makes the exercise much more difficult, is capital practice.

In several of Napoleon's campaigns there are incidentally indications of the extensive use then made of despatch-riders. In the course of the Jena Campaign Murat is reproached by Napoleon, who writes to him as follows :—

> A despatch took six hours to come to hand from Kronach to Coburg—15 miles. This is not quick enough. You have not placed a service of despatch-riders as I told you to do.

In the Ulm campaign despatches were sent through at regular intervals from Murat's column of cavalry in the Black Forest to Napoleon many miles away on his left, but this work was usually performed by officers riding despatch.

TRACKING, ETC.

Nearly all men brought up in the country have a certain instinct, and habitually read the story of tracks on the ground wherever they go, but the remainder require a considerable amount of training not to ride over the most obvious tracks without any observation and deduction. A few lessons of follow-

ing tracks in the early morning after a wet night across country and along roads will tend to establish this very necessary habit in a cavalry soldier, and once acquired, it will last him a lifetime.

The institution of regimental scouts has gone far to train our troops in all these forms of useful knowledge, and where commanding officers make a point of passing all those who are likely to come on for promotion to N.C.O.'s, through the scouts' course, the advance of the regiment in a most useful, but not very showy, accomplishment has been most marked. In all this form of instruction it is well worth while to make the schemes interesting and even romantic, and let them run to a conclusion which depends largely on the cunning and ability of the officers and men engaged.

There can surely be few more marked successes in the efforts of the nation to "return to the wild" in the body, whilst raising the mind to the higher levels, than the institution of "Boy Scouts," and it is one which every genuine soldier must heartily welcome.

In all detached work where the cavalryman is engaged "on his own" against well-armed men, far more dangerous antagonists than any wild animals, there usually comes a time when prudence calls loudly to the ordinary man to turn and so avoid the chance of a bullet, whilst duty tells him that he should try and see or find out more. There is no reward in sight, there are no onlookers to applaud, there is none of the retriever dog's instinct to save, which leads men to sacrifice their life in pulling out a comrade;

there may be a love for excitement and taking chances, but it is soon dulled by frequent experiences, or there may be the callousness resulting from daily risk. It is at these times that the previous training and bringing up, the tone of his corps and comrades, and the thought that he has a duty to those comrades, may have a good deal to say to a man alone with his duty.

The sneering, niggling cynic will calculate, "What reward is there for this?" and go back ready to lie, whilst the honest soldier will go forward ready to take his medicine, even if he feels the anticipatory pain about the third button of the waistcoat. That was the right sort of man, who, when chaffed by a comrade for his evident trepidation, replied, "Yes, and if you were half as much afraid as I am, you would run away." It is the reasoned four-o'clock-in-the-morning courage, determination, and honesty, backed by a trained knowledge of his duty, that is needed when the cavalry soldier is on detached work.

PRISONERS

To make prisoners is often one of the most important means of obtaining information. Prisoners almost invariably will give information quite willingly. Incidentally this is a point which should be known to all cavalry officers, who should constantly warn their men: first, that they are certain to be cleverly questioned if taken prisoner; second, if that fails, they will probably be placed where pretended prisoners

of war can hear their conversation, and so on; third, threats and inducements will be made use of.

CONVOY DUTY

This is work for which a detachment of cavalry is frequently told off to do the advanced, flank, and rear guards. In order to save the horses, it will be found best to divide the respective forces and work *en bondes*, moving quickly over open ground, and getting into successive positions where cover is available. In each of these a rest, and possibly a mouthful of grass, will serve to keep the horses fresh.

Nothing is more annoying to a column commander, who has regard for his horses, than to see one of his mounted men using his horse as an easy-chair whilst delay takes place at some difficult crossing. Strict orders are necessary in this matter. Many a time have we seen an irascible commanding officer ride up behind one of these spectators and jerk him violently off his horse.

It may not be out of place here to say that an escort to a convoy should invariably be at least twice the strength of any force which is likely to attack it. The handicap of being tied to a convoy following a certain route and supplying detachments for advanced and flank guards and of fighting on ground of the enemy's choosing, etc., necessitates this, if safety is desired. Small parties of horsemen should be sent on, wide of and parallel to the road, to get touch of the enemy; the principle of separating the rôle of information and security is thus adhered to.

CHAPTER XV

RAIDS

THE very idea of a cavalry raid is attractive and carries with it a certain romance.

It is impossible to do otherwise than admire the boldness of the conception of Stuart's raid in 1862, when, with 1200 men and two guns, he rode right round the Federal lines, alarmed McClellan, and caused him to withdraw troops to cover his line of cavalry and thus weaken his first line. Yet even this raid, brilliant as it was and tactically successful, is said to be strategically a mistake. For, to quote General Alexander's *American Civil War*, it "seriously alarmed McClellan for his rear. But for it the probabilities are he would never have given the subject any thought, and he certainly would not have been prepared with a fleet of loaded transports on hand when he was, soon after, forced to change his base to Harrison's landing on the James River. . . . On the whole, therefore, the *éclat* of our brilliant raid lost us much more than its results were worth. Where important strategy is on foot, too great care can scarcely be used to avoid making any such powerful suggestion to the enemy as resulted in this case."

Similarly the raid in 1863, by the same general, had disastrous results for the Confederates. Lee was then preparing for his campaign north of the Potomac. Stuart proposed moving with the cavalry in between the Federal army and Washington, and rejoining the main army when north of the Potomac. Lee, unfortunately, sanctioned it, and Stuart set out on the 24th June, did some minor damage to the Federals, but lost Lee, not rejoining him till late in the afternoon of the 2nd July, the second day of the battle of Gettysburg. Had Lee had his cavalry with him, that campaign might have had a very different ending. Therefore, in this case, the timing of the raid was wrong, and of benefit only to the enemy.

The value of Gourko's raid across the Balkans in July 1877, when in eight days he carried dismay into the heart of Turkey, destroyed parts of the railroad and telegraph on the principal lines, and gained a great deal of information as to Turkish movements, appears to be undoubted. His force, however, was not entirely a cavalry one.

Coming to a more recent date, in the Manchurian War, the Japanese, only a few days before the battle of Mukden, by means of an undertaking against the rear of the Russians, which was carried out by two Japanese squadrons (280 men), marching as quickly as possible by night and hiding by day, succeeded in reaching an important railway bridge 200 kilometres north of Tieh-ling and in rear of the Russians. The troops covering the bridge were surprised at night, and their attention was thus drawn away from

the bridge, which a skilfully-led patrol succeeded in blowing up. The railway service was interrupted for several days. A regular panic set in among the Russian Headquarter Staff. The immediate result was that 8000 Russian troops were diverted for the defence of the line and were unable to take part in the decisive battle at Mukden: an instance of most admirable timing of a raid.

It is true that cavalry raids may disorganize the lines of communication "which in the case of large armies," as Bernhardi says, "have increased in importance." But, on the other hand, we must remember that well-organized lines of communication are now almost invariably railways. On these there is a most efficient engineer service, with a breakdown train and gang of trained road-layers and menders always ready. These are able to mend a railway in approximately the same time that it takes to break it up. It is only badly organized lines of communication which are really vulnerable,—though we must not forget that the blowing up of a French bridge near the frontier in 1870, during the siege of Paris, very nearly caused the siege to be raised.

The pages of De Brack's *Light Cavalry Outposts* are full of instances of successful raids, those of which Curély was the hero being specially attractive and effective.[1] In our own knowledge are the raids of De Wet and others on our line of communication in South Africa, which entailed a large number of troops

[1] Curély, in 1812, at Pultusk, with 100 men of the 20th Chasseurs, captured from the enemy twenty pieces of artillery, and took the general-in-chief of the Russian army a prisoner.

being allotted to the defence of the railway; whilst little less effective were the operations of our columns against the Boers when, hiding by day and riding by night, they swooped down upon the Boers and captured their herds of cattle and horses. The Boers suffered little inconvenience from those columns which had not recourse to methods combining speed with avoidance of observation, and with secrecy in their preparation.

All these operations are obviously those which are favoured by "conditions of sparsely-settled terrain and very partially-developed telegraphic communication, and few roads and railways," and the success of many of the American raids forms no basis for the assumption, so often made, that equal results would attend their employment in Europe outside Russia.[1]

The other side of the question may be seen in some of the unsuccessful raids entered upon by both sides in the American War, when raids became "the fashion"—raids, which were not only unsuccessful, but which even had the effect of depriving their own side of their cavalry at a most important juncture, quite apart from the number of cavalry horses rendered useless.

A typical instance of this is seen in Wheeler's raid on the Federal lines of communications. When beaten off at Dalton he made his way into East Tennessee; his subsequent operations in that region had no effect upon the fortune of the two armies battling

[1] Maude, *Cavalry: Its Past and Future*, p. 185.

round Atlanta. Hood, deprived of Wheeler's cavalry —"the eyes of his army"—found himself in the dark as to Sherman's movements. On the evening of the 27th he jumped hastily to the conclusion that Wheeler's raid had been successful, and that Sherman's army was retiring from lack of supplies to the other side of the Chattahoochee. For forty-eight hours he adhered to this strange delusion, and by that time the Federals had gained a position from which it was impossible to dislodge them.[1]

Quite without permanent result were the big raids by De Wet into the Cape Colony and by Botha into Natal, both of which caused the loss of many overridden horses, and had a bad moral effect on the Boers, who were hunted from pillar to post; but the attack on our mule transport in rear of the columns moving on Kimberley and Paardeberg was an excellent piece of work and far-reaching in its effect.

Again, the Russian raids against the Japanese were strangely unfortunate in their results, but it is probable that sufficient secrecy was not observed prior to these raids moving off.

Taking Mischenko's raid or reconnaissance into Northern Korea early in the Russo-Japanese War as an instance, it is interesting to see the manner, first, in which it was met by the Japanese; second, in which it allowed itself to be distracted from the main object. This raid was sent to find out what force of Japanese

[1] The Atlanta Campaign, p. 389 of Wood and Edmonds' *Civil War in the United States.*

was in front of the Russians, and, arriving at Chon Chou at 11 A.M., "tumbled upon" a town garrison, deployed five sotnias in all, keeping one in reserve, thus voluntarily renouncing its mobility to attack a town. The result might have been foretold. The force was held in front by two squadrons dismounted and attacked by one squadron mounted on the flank, meanwhile a Japanese infantry battalion is brought up at the double. Result: retirement of the Russians, reconnaissance practically valueless.

In the case of General Mischenko's long ride to Yinkov with fifty-three sotnias of Cossacks, four commandos of mounted scouts, twenty-two guns, and four machine guns, the primary object of the raid, and a notable one, was to interrupt the junction of the Japanese troops, freed by the fall of Port Arthur, with those on the Shaho, a quite secondary objective being the stores at Yinkov. 1500 pack-horses accompanied the column. 30 kilometres were covered in two days. On the third day the garrisons of Hai-cheng (1500) and Ta-shih-chiao, somewhat larger (the distance between these towns being 20 miles), sufficed to turn the leader of 9000 cavalry from his first objective, and to send him towards Yinkov. Here he dismounted sixteen sotnias for a night attack, but, meeting with wire entanglements and a vigorous resistance, retired.

Nothing had been effected.

Rennenkampf's reconnaissance on the 9th May to Kuan-tien-cheng. Force at his disposal one battalion, ten sotnias, and eight guns. We read that, making

"two very trying marches," he reaches Kuan-tien-cheng with six sotnias. "The remainder of the detachment had been left behind at various points on the line of communication, partly on account of the exhaustion of the men and horses, partly to secure its line of retreat. As the march had been carried out without any regard to the pace of the various arms, the detachment was completely scattered." A Japanese force of 400 infantry left the town, but shortly returned reinforced by a battalion, which unexpectedly attacked and drove the Russians away. The result of the reconnaissance was nil. And so on. . . . Rennenkampf was indefatigable. But the work "though so fruitless had exhausted the sotnias, which were now considerably under strength, and most of the horses had sore backs," and so it will always be. Those who have seen the state of men and horses after four, three, or even two nights in the saddle will not need assurance on this subject.

Von Pelet Narbonne puts down the general failure of Russian raids to the small value of the Cossacks, who were not trained in offensive dismounted action, nor possessed with a keen desire to use the sword. He then compares the method of the Japanese, whose tactics were more suited in his opinion to the intricate and mountainous nature of the country. They sent infantry with their cavalry, who carried out the unavoidable reconnaissance combat. This method certainly economized the cavalry, an arm in which the Japanese were very deficient. Again, the Japanese cavalry frequently

met the Russian cavalry by dismounted fire from the mud walls of villages, and were mistaken by them for infantry.

What, then, are the general conclusions at which we arrive ?—

1st. That big raids seldom have results which justify the loss and wear and tear of the horses and men.

2nd. That a raid must not be entered upon except with a special and adequate purpose and as a result of careful reconnaissance by spies and others.

3rd. That once entered upon, the leader must devote himself to carrying out his mission and not allow himself to be turned aside on any account whatever.

4th. That a small, swift, well-hidden raid on a line of communication made at a favourable moment may cause the detachment of a large number of troops, whose absence will be felt in the decisive battle.

5th. That raids against which the enemy has made preparations are purposeless, but are nevertheless often made by cavalry leaders, lest they should incur the reproach of having done nothing.

6th. That the first raids in a war are often successful.

7th. That a friendly country favours raids, and conversely an enemy's country renders them difficult to the verge of impracticability.

8th. That cavalry should not be sent off on raids when required for action on a battlefield.

9th. That a raid is like any other detachment, *i.e.* if it succeeds in drawing away from the decisive point at the right time a stronger force than itself, it is justified; and therefore the chief point to consider in planning a raid is its timing.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRAINING OF THE CAVALRY OFFICER

"However much thou art read in theory, if thou hast no practice thou art ignorant. He is neither a sage philosopher nor an acute divine, but a beast of burden with a load of books. How can that brainless head know or comprehend whether he carries on his back a library or bundle of faggots?"—SADI, *Gulistan*, p. 273.

As each year passes it appears to be more difficult to get officers for the cavalry, consequently any attempt to state what is the best way to train them is always subject to the proviso of the old-time cookery-book, "First catch your hare." We all know the type of officer required, but we are also aware how hard it is to get him. He has been described over and over again, and can be seen in any cavalry regiment; a man who combines an addiction to, and some knowledge of, field sports, involving horses, with sufficient intelligence to pass into Sandhurst. In order to catch this hare, mess expenses in cavalry have been reduced to a minimum. He is given chargers by Government; they are hired by him if used for other than military purposes, but otherwise they are not paid for. Uniform has been made less expensive. Finally, examinations have been relaxed, though certainly an increase of pay has not yet been tried. And still

parents and guardians hesitate to send their sons into a service which affords a better training and discipline of mind, body, and manners for the first few years, than is available in any other profession.

Extravagances in the old days have frightened candidates for cavalry commissions away. The more irresponsible press write against the Cavalry.[1] Fewer country gentlemen can afford the requisite allowance to their sons.[2] Expenditure all round has increased, whilst incomes, at any rate those derived from land, have shrunk. More youngsters go abroad to the colonies. "How hardly shall the rich man enter" the barrack gate now, when so much more work is to be done![3] All honour to him when he does so, and sticks to his profession. Hard work, danger, adversity are the making of a man, and those who fear or shirk such are not likely to make good cavalry officers, or, for the matter of that, good citizens of the Empire. A short comparison of the life of the cavalry officer thirty to forty years

[1] Undoubtedly the press wrote against the cavalry and the medical departments far more than against other arms and departments during the late South African War. Both have made great progress since the war. *Sic itur ad astra!*

[2] True nobility is seen in the reply of Von Moltke, who, asked why he was so economical, as far as his person was concerned, whilst generous to others, replied, that it was in the hope that the officers of the army might be persuaded to follow his example, for that he knew how many families grudged themselves all possible luxuries to keep their sons in their position of officers of the army. "The less a man requires the greater he is," he added.

[3] We like to call to mind Ruskin's saying in *The Future of England*: "Riches, so far from being necessary to *noblesse*, are adverse to it. So utterly that the first character of all the nobility, who have founded past dynasties in the world, is to be poor; poor often by oath, always by generosity, and of every true knight in the chivalric age the first thing that history tells you is that he never kept treasure himself."

ago and nowadays may elucidate this to some extent.

Then, as a rule, throughout the winter one parade per week, a horse parade on Saturday, took place. The officer who could afford to do so could hunt every day in the week as long as he went round his stables once during the day. Only the orderly officer (and often his belt was taken by the adjutant, or riding master, or a sergeant-major in the winter) remained in barracks. Sometimes there appeared in orders for Saturday: "Riding School for officers not hunting." In the summer there were no manœuvres, and only in very exceptional cases was there brigade training. A regimental parade under the C.O. once a week. An adjutant's drill (only officers junior to the adjutant being present) once a week. All training of men, and they were of longer service then, was done by the adjutant and regimental drill instructors; men and horses were handed over, theoretically ready for the ranks, to the troop officer. To sum up, then, the pay was nominal, and the enforced work was ditto.

Nowadays young officers begin work at daybreak and go on till midday, 1 o'clock, or perhaps till 3 P.M. The squadron officer is now training a succession of men for the Reserve. There is winter training, then squadron training, regimental, brigade, and possibly divisional training. The men are trained to a much higher standard, and they are trained now by the squadron officers and not by the adjutant and his staff.

The nation, supremely ignorant in regard to the detail of military matters, hardly appreciates the fact

(i.) that nowadays a cavalry officer does at least twice as much work as he did formerly, and (ii.) that the cavalry officer not only devotes his life to a patriotic idea, but must also devote a large portion of his income, at least £200 to £300 a year, to the same purpose.[1] (iii.) The emoluments which he derives from the public purse are, if anything, less nowadays than a hundred years ago.

The old type of cavalry officer, who joined the service for the amusement to be derived from it, is scarcer; but still he is to be found, and he faces hard work cheerfully and well. Against the discouraging influences, and the worst of these is "worry" substituted for "work," he has his *esprit de corps* and a fondness for the life, which is an open-air one, and in many respects an interesting one.

For the first few years or so of his service an excess of book knowledge is not required, but it is desirable that the young cavalry officer should be able to express himself clearly in words or on paper, and this he must gain by thinking clearly. Let us consider his duties in those first years, and then we shall see what to teach him. The principle has always been maintained that it is right to work

[1] Prince Kraft points out how great a price a German officer pays for the swagger of belonging to a cavalry regiment. He enlarges on the trials to health entailed thereby, the long work in the riding school, with the shakes and jars given to the bowels and spine, which in many cases have sown the seeds of chronic illness, even during their first year of service as lieutenants, owing to which some of them have been invalided before their time. Then he goes on to point out the expenses entailed by good chargers and their upkeep. Finally, he says that in the German cavalry in no regiment can an officer live unless he can afford to pay £100 a year out of his own pocket, and so he reckons that a cavalry officer before he has twenty years' service has expended £2000, that is, has sacrificed that sum to the Fatherland.

him hard when he first joins, and later he can drop into the pace of the remainder. You must teach him to ride and to train a horse. A few officers can do this when they join, and think they are fit to pass out of the riding school at once. But this is not the case; they have next to learn to teach others. Again, he must learn to shoot. He must learn to groom and shoe a horse, and to apply simple remedies. He must learn the few main rules of tactics, reconnaissance, and scouting. He must learn cavalry pioneering. He must learn to use his personal weapon on foot and horseback. All these he must learn, not merely so that he is able to do them himself, but so that he may be able to instruct and be an example to others. He will be taught the care of his men's health in barracks and on service. He may even be taught book-keeping, and he will certainly learn something of house economy on the mess committee.

But the high-spirited youngster whom we want, and who can leave the service when he wants to, must in some respects be treated like a blood horse, whom we feel we can guide, but cannot stop at a single stride's notice, as we could a temperate old horse. We must preserve his verve and desire to take the initiative, even if it occasionally leads him to do wrong, when we should remember the great legal maxim, "If the heart is right," and also our own youthful days.

The addiction to manly, and especially to rough and dangerous, field sports must be regarded as an immense asset towards efficiency for war. Time spent

in the chase, "the image of war," must not be regarded as so many hours less given to his employer by the cavalry officer. We particularly want the hunting breed of man, because he goes into danger for the love of it.[1] He must also be able to perform any of the diverse duties which he may be called on to carry out on service, such as to fortify a village, construct a pontoon, court-martial a prisoner, and so on.

It is very desirable that he should have as much as possible practically taught to him. A knowledge of the tactics of the other arms should be gained thus, and we are responsible for giving the opportunities, since this will not and cannot be learnt theoretically; *verb. sap.* Officers, *faute de mieux*, should be sent to infantry camps and artillery practice camps, not to gun and company drill. This attachment to other arms is carried out by some nations, and especially France, to a far greater extent than in our service. It is invaluable in breaking down the watertight compartment system of training, and in establishing a closer union of arms.

The elements of strategy should also be taught. A few good lectures by an officer who has a taste for this will teach more than a six months' poring over

[1] The French rightly lay stress on ability to cross an intricate country. Their *Service de la cavalerie en campagne*, p. 191, says: "To ride hard across country and particularly over a steeplechase course is an excellent preparation for reconnaissance work. An officer accustomed to long gallops, not only at ordinary, but also at racing pace, may defy pursuit by one who has not had the same experience of leaping, and especially of leaping at full speed, and of the powers of his horse."

Our British cavalry officers had justly a great reputation for their abilities in this respect in the Peninsular War.

books, for which during his first three years a young officer has little time to spare. At the same time the genuine soldier cannot but be interested in questions of strategy. A knowledge of it gives an entirely new aspect to what might otherwise appear rather dull history.

Then you may say that after three years of this "our young officer is complete and a valuable asset"?

"Far from it."

"But what more can be asked of him? This covers the complete syllabus, appendices, etc., etc."

"There is one thing without which all this is as 'that which profiteth not.'"

"And that is?"

"He must have a strong sense of DUTY, without which he is 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.'"

Now man is not born with a sense of duty (though the most riotous young hound often becomes the best in the pack); it has to be taught; it has to be learnt practically as well as theoretically; it has to be borne in on him by precept and example as an excellent, a noble and a desirable thing, a thing in which to glory. What is it? The abnegation of self, the working for the good of all, *in foro conscientiae*, and, above all, without making difficulties.

The French *Manuel du gradé de cavalerie*, p. 12, gives the following definition: "Le dévouement, le sentiment généreux qui pousse l'homme à faire le sacrifice de sa vie pour le salut de la patrie et de ses semblables."

He must learn that the "superiority which disciplined soldiers show over undisciplined masses is primarily the consequence of the confidence which each has in his comrades" (Von der Goltz, *Nation in Arms*, p. 162).

The young officer begins by having a pride in his troop, squadron, and regiment, by trying by his own individual exertions first to make himself fit to lead and instruct, and next to make his own unit better than others. If he does not set the example of being better than others, he will not render much help to the men serving under him. They will look to him, admiring what is good in him and despising what is bad, summing him up, weighing him in mind, if not in words, as they see him.[1] And the eyes of a regiment see everything. He must be a very acute dissembler who can escape the five hundred pairs of eyes which watch him at every turn. This alone is a good training for any man. Very much indeed naturally depends on the influences under which an officer falls on joining a regiment.

A strict but just commanding officer, who works, but does not worry, the men under him, makes not only a good regiment, but a regiment which will fight well in war, whilst a slack and indulgent commanding officer, even if just, will soon lessen a regiment's discipline to an extent which will render it

[1] After a sharp fight one day in South Africa, a colonial officer remarked to his column commander, "We did not think there would be anything on to-day, because you were wearing your slacks and riding the black horse!" The column commander felt, though he did not acknowledge, the justice of the remark.

of little value in war. In peace, to be sure, no one takes much notice of this fact, but in war the slack commanding officer becomes an object of detestation to all concerned, and he invariably "lets in" every one. He is most despised by the very men whom he tries to save from dangers. It is a curious fact in human nature that usually they think he is doing this because he himself is afraid.

If, however, there are altogether some four or five really good officers of various ranks in a regiment, their influence and peace-activity will save the regiment from much that even a slack commanding officer can do to its detriment. All young officers fall under their influence, and there remains a substratum of rock under the shifting sands.

Von der Goltz says (*Nation in Arms*, p. 144): "Every regiment brings into the field a certain character of its own." That character depends on its officers—often on one officer long since dead and gone. In one regiment the shoeing was remarkably good; it transpired that a former colonel, a martinet dead thirty years before, used to "break" the farrier if a horse lost a shoe in the field.

With his duties and his sports, for the first two or three years in a good regiment, the subaltern has no time to think, and if he is the right man in the right place, enjoys himself thoroughly.

Let us now hark forrard to the full-fledged cavalry officer of three to seven years' service who is learning to command a squadron, and may find himself doing so often enough. He has now time to look round,

and much depends again on the tone of the regiment and the man himself whether he takes to his profession seriously or "soldiers" on to pass the time pleasantly. He may aspire to be a staff officer, or a good regimental officer, or may have no aspirations.

With the staff officer we are not concerned; what we are now considering is, What process will render the regimental cavalry officer of most value to the service? Constant drills and parades will not do so; they belong to the past. To put first spit and polish and show parades is a thing of the past in nearly all minds. But this must not be taken to mean that drill is not necessary. Those who have led in war drilled and undrilled men aver, with reason, that smooth, easy working and confident leading only exist where the men have been carefully drilled. A good deal can be done at a slow, go-as-you-please pace with semi-drilled intelligent men, but they have no chance, especially in cases of emergency, against men of lower intelligence, well trained by the officer who leads them. Drill in the evolutions necessary in the field is consequently essential to a high standard of fighting ability. To drill well largely resolves itself into the power to observe and correct faults in such a way that the impression remains. The experienced drill and the coach of a racing eight know by experience that, owing to the imperfections of man's nature, they are bound to meet with certain faults which will have an unsteadying and deterrent effect on the squadron's or boat's progress. They address themselves to the correction of these characteristic faults, explaining

their reasons, often affecting decorative, if forceful epithets, similes, and expressions, just as a preacher or orator does, in order to give point and pungency to his discourse and to make it remembered. Von Schmidt in his *Cavalry Instructions* usually details at the end of each paragraph bearing on an evolution or practice their characteristic faults, and the cause, effect, and cure of these. Primed with a knowledge of these, and possessed of some small power of explanation, the squadron or troop officer will soon make an astonishing difference in his command's power of evolution. Without them, he too often gropes in the dark.

What we would suggest, then, is to encourage this officer (i.) constantly to practise the situations in which he and his men may find themselves in war, and (ii.) to train and exercise his command so that it is difficult for circumstances to arise of which they have not had some previous experience;[1] (iii.) to practise giving short verbal orders in the saddle in proper form (*vide F.S.R.*, Part I.) till it becomes a second nature, both in himself to give orders thus, and his command to place those orders in their mind and act upon them in a logical sequence; (iv.) to become by practice a person of resource, and to train his men so that they become "handy men," *e.g.* able to get a waggon up and down a steep slope, or improvise rafts, etc., or to place a farm in a state of defence, and to do so quietly and in an orderly

[1] In *Before Port Arthur in a Torpedo Boat* the Japanese officer reflects: "Is there any situation which can happen for which I and my men have not been practised?"

manner; (v.) to be himself a capable master of his weapons, and able to instruct intelligently; (vi.) to know the situations in which a battle on a large scale may place him, and to be able to foresee what are the probable opportunities of which he may have to take advantage, and so to train his men that they will act with intelligence in such cases.[1]

Here we must pause whilst we make it plain that the really stupid man, who has no imagination, makes a very bad officer for training purposes, because in peace-time he is quite unable to picture to himself what does happen in an action. The same unfortunate trait makes him a bad leader in war, because he is unable to picture what the enemy will most probably do in certain cases. In the cavalry this type of officer has no place, even in the lower ranks, because the cavalry officer so frequently has to act by himself, and then the fate of an army may be dependent on what he sees, or on the information which he sifts and sends into the chief. As an infantry officer of the same rank he is more under the eyes of a commanding officer.

What, then, are the conclusions at which we arrive?

1. That we draw on a class who have not been used to much brain work.

2. That the young officer should be for choice country bred, fond of sport, a "trier," and must have some private income.

3. That now he works much harder than he used

[1] Cf. Langlois, *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*, p. 144: "The manner in which troops are to be employed in the different situations which arise must be left to the initiative of those in command in every degree of rank."

to do, at first especially; but the work is, or ought to be, congenial work. His pay is the same as when he did little or no work in peace-time. So he is a practical patriot.

4. That his work consists largely of teaching others.

5. That many of the attributes which are most desirable, can be tested by no written examination.

6. That to recognize and do his duty is one of these. As regards this, much depends on his surroundings in the regiment which he joins.

7. That a cavalry officer as he gets up to three to seven years' service, though he requires little book learning, requires fairly wide practical knowledge, also considerable powers of imagination; without these, his abilities for training his men and for leading them in war are likely to be defective.

8. Also that the main point which he must regard in all his training is not only, "Is this a situation in which my command may find itself in war?" but also, "Is there any situation in war in which my command is not practised?"

CHAPTER XVII

THE TRAINING OF THE CAVALRY OFFICER (*continued*)

. . . "ignorance is the curse of God,
Knowledge the wing wherewith we fly to heaven."

SHAKESPEARE.

"War is a business and must be learned like any other profession."—NAPOLEON.

THE attributes which a cavalry officer of the rank of squadron leader and upwards may to advantage possess are so many as to defy enumeration; some of them really possessed in perfection are so rare and valuable that *in war* they may even counterbalance the fact that their owner is barely able to read or write.

It was not without reason that Napoleon said of Ney: "When a man is as brave as he is, he is worth his weight in diamonds."

To cavalry officers of all others are the reflections of Von der Goltz applicable, when he says: "*Restless activity* on the part of the general is the first condition of connected and rapid action in war"; and then he details the weakening of troops exposed to hardships, "exertion, and privations of all kinds, fatiguing marches, and wet nights in bivouac, cheerfully endured for a short time, but not for months together. They damp martial ardour considerably.

A few privileged natures escape the effect of such conditions, but not so the mass of men."

To the officer it is well that it should be known that, as war goes on, he may expect to find himself weakening, but, as with any other disease, forewarned is forearmed.

It is a duty to his country for a cavalry officer in peace-time to take such exercise in the available sports of hunting, pig-sticking, polo, big-game shooting, and other exercises as will keep muscles and lungs in condition and training, and his nerves in order. The cavalry officer, and for that matter the general and staff officer, who seldom gets on a horse in peace-time, will not suddenly change his nature in war; on the contrary, the enforced exercise will knock him up. Long days in the saddle, and nights spent on the outpost line with an insufficiency of food, the constant strain of vigilance will tell on most men, in fact in some degree on all men. But the officer who knows beforehand that he may expect his initiative, firmness, zeal, and love for action to evaporate somewhat after some months or even weeks of campaigning will be on the look-out. He will school his mind and countenance in cheerfulness and lightheartedness before his subordinates:

> Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
> And merrily hent the stile-a;
> A merry heart goes all the day,
> Your sad tires in a mile-a.
>
> *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3.

He will practise himself in firmly repressing all grumbling and cynicism, in assiduously performing

all details of duty, and in constantly caring for the welfare of his men and horses. "Such independent persons," says Emil Reich, "have long since learnt to stand adversity, to be, as the saying is, 'good losers.' This has given England her peculiar tone, her stamina, her power in adversity."[1] With such all will go well, for war is the region of reality in which there is no place for shams; but woe betide the regiment where the senior officers set an example of cynicism, grumbling, neglect of duty, want of zeal; these faults become exaggerated in their subordinates till they result in the worst military crimes and in the disgrace of the regiment, by a state of indiscipline and neglect of duty which only the strongest measures can put right.[2]

Whatever the value of a senior officer of cavalry from the point of view of courage, horsemanship, resolution, and bodily fitness for a campaign, there are other points to which he should devote attention. Von Bernhardi (p. 288 of *Cavalry in Future Wars*) says:

> A comprehensive military education, and at least a general grasp of the principles of higher strategy, are essentials for every reconnoitring officer.

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[1] *Germany's Swelled Head*, p. 165.

[2] Note the strong measures which Lasalle, one of Napoleon's best cavalry leaders, is said to have taken at Pultusk in 1807. His brigade was about to attack the Russian artillery, and about 2 P.M. had hardly advanced twenty paces before the cry of "Halt!" was heard and at once passed down the line without any one knowing where it had started. The two regiments turned and began to retire at a gallop, though the Russian guns had not fired a shot. Rallied after seven or eight minutes and brought back, their brigadier-general, in a furious rage, kept them in line until midnight under the enemy's fire. So heavy was this that the general had two horses killed under him. Men and horses fell at every minute, but it is said not a man stirred, nor was a murmur heard.—PICARD.

Now a field officer of cavalry may find himself at any time thrown on his own resources, perhaps cut off from his base, many miles from superior authority and with several squadrons at his disposal. His action, its direction and scope, and the information gained or missed may have the most marked effect on the course of the operations.

Again, at any period in an engagement the moment for action may arise; will then an officer, who is not trained in peace-time to know his duty, and to act on his own initiative, have the nerve "to go in," without waiting for the order which nearly always comes too late? Settled convictions as to his duty,[1] acquired by previous practice and study of similar situations in peace, will nerve him to a correct interpretation of his duty, which may or may not be to charge. He will remember what was said of so-and-so who did or did not "go in." He must be able to await a favourable opportunity in cold-blooded calm; and the time for deliberation once over, he must possess the cool daring to throw relentlessly all his available forces into battle.[2]

About the end of the Boer War an officer was heard to say: "I only learnt one thing at a garrison

[1] On one occasion in the operations in South Africa, 1899-1902, a troop, ordered to gallop a kopje, halted at 700 yards from it, dismounted, and began to shoot; a troop of a rival corps was at once sent to gallop through them and did what they had been told to do—took the kopje; a salutary and effective lesson.

Another time a squadron attacking was held up by wire whilst under fire, and began to come back; another squadron was led at a gallop through them. The irresolute squadron at once turned and followed them. The art is to loose the support at the right moment and with due emphasis.

[2] *German Cavalry Regulations*, 1909, par. 398.

class which I attended. In a rearguard action my instructor told me to go lightly out of two positions and then let the enemy have it hot at the third one, when they came on with confidence and without discretion. That tip has been more useful to me than anything else I ever learnt, and has pulled me through again and again."

But besides this a great deal is now to be learnt, and many ideas gained from the many excellent military works which are translated into English from other languages. Thirty years ago, beyond Von Schmidt and De Brack (certainly the best of their kind), few foreign works on tactics and the more recent wars had been translated. Nowadays four are translated where one was formerly. These give a better idea of the varied rôle of cavalry on a battle-field; we get a little farther than the drill of a squadron or regiment; we can see laid bare the faults of our cavalry and of their direction in South Africa, or what was noticed by various military attachés as regards the shortcomings of cavalry in the Manchurian or other campaigns. These, read and noted in an intelligent fashion, and more especially if later discussed amongst the officers of a regiment in their application to the work of training a regiment, are of great value. Perhaps their principal value is that they enable officers to lay out plans of action for emergencies, to get what Langlois calls a doctrine.[1] "Without a doctrine," he says, "text-

[1] The French *Service de la cavalerie en campagne*, 1909, at page 190, thus lays down the rôle of the commanding officer: "To direct his officers towards a common doctrine, that of resolves which are determined, even

books are of little avail. Better a doctrine without text-books than text-books without a doctrine, for the former was the case in Napoleon's time."

And what was Napoleon's doctrine? Did not Napoleon beyond all others study *moral* in its application to the training of officers and men, and to the winning of battles? We see it in his selection of his generals. Ney began as a leader of partisan forces. Massena was the head of a band of smugglers. Again, we may note it in the selection of his staff officers and A.D.C.'s of whom he asked (1st): Is he lucky? and (2nd): Is he enterprising? It is evident in his wise distribution of rewards; "I want blood, not ink," he remarked to a commanding officer who had put forward his quartermaster for a decoration. To another, of whom he had asked the character of a man who was claiming a reward for well-known acts of bravery, when the reply was that the man was a "drunkard and a thief," he said, "Bah, blood washes all that away." We see, then, that his *doctrine* was that the man who will shed his blood is the rarest and most valuable asset in war; and so he, the great leader and organizer of armies, put it before all others, and thus he made it the "fashion." No doubt Napoleon could have made "ink" the fashion, had he thought it desirable to do so. Further, he decorated men on the field of battle, bearing in mind the maxim: "Bis dat qui cito dat." Any senior officer may imitate this excellent practice, by putting

rash, but well considered; to develop in them initiative and personality, and to make them not merely carriers-out of orders, but leaders who know how to reflect, decide, and take responsibility on themselves."

in his orders, regimental, brigade or otherwise, a notice of an "Act of Courage," etc. If this is done the same evening it has a great effect.

That the Japanese thought of this is evidenced by the fact that repeatedly in the orders of the day, and in the proclamations of the army commanders and of the commander-in-chief, there were references to the excellent information and reports which reached them from reconnoitring detachments and patrols, and on one occasion Marshal Oyama categorically stated that without the help which had been afforded him by the cavalry, he would have been groping in the dark in the measures he was undertaking.[1]

Those who neglect to think about these matters soon wear out the patience of the bravest men.[2] De Brack writes :—

> Reward, then, above all things the courage of him who is first in the mêlée, who delivers his blows with coolness and certainty, who is last in a retreat, who rescues his officers, his comrades, who captures a standard, who recaptures artillery, who is never dismayed by bad luck, and is always ready and willing. . . . There are several kinds of courage, but it is courage of the daring and impetuous kind which wins battles.

Our text-books have had little to say about *moral*,

[1] Supplement No. 86 to the *International Revue über die gesammten Armeen und Flotten*, May 1907.

[2] Curély, the hero of countless brave deeds and daring reconnaissances in Napoleon's campaigns, had by 1814 got as far as the command of a regiment, the 10th Hussars. On the 12th February at Château-Thierry he got an opportunity, and successfully threw his regiment at the flank of thirty squadrons of Landwehr. This gave an opportunity to Letort with the Dragoons of the Guard to charge the front. Napoleon in his bulletin only put: "Colonel Curély made himself conspicuous"; but he at once promoted him to the rank of general for this feat of arms.

and we were apt to take it for granted that all is for the best in the best of all possible armies, so long has the question been overlooked. But is that wise? Should we not know why one regiment will take a loss of 50 per cent and "go in" next day again cheerfully, while another loses 10 per cent, and does not want any more fighting?

Is it not part of the training of the senior officers of cavalry that they should know the nature of the infantry combat, that they should grasp the consumption of reserves and the gradual moral degradation of the enemy's infantry, that they should have studied works such as Colonel Ardant du Picq's *Études du Combat*, which furnish the most thorough and complete dissection of *moral* in war?

In a note to one of his chapters on the value of discipline, Ardant du Picq relates how in the eighteenth century four British captains "stood off" when signalled to for help in an attack about to be made by their admiral. The latter won his fight, but was mortally wounded. He, however, sent for the four captains, court-martialled them and had three hanged at the yard-arm, and the fourth cashiered before he himself died.

Every leader should know how narrow is the path which he will tread when in command of troops in a fight. How essential it is, then, in cricket parlance to "give no chances." And it is a great mistake for young officers to be left in ignorance of the fact that a good fighting regiment, battery or battalion, yes, and brigade or division, can only exist where there

is a high standard of *moral* and a thorough mutual understanding that every one will, and must, play the game, be the risk, difficulty, or odium what it may.

Polo players will tell you that one selfish player will ruin a team. This is ten times more true in war, where they will see the selfish polo player skulk, run away, or let in his commanding officer and the army in the very first fight he gets into. And cavalry officers of all ranks must learn in peace that it is only by practising at all times broad-minded comradeship not only in their own corps and arm, but with the other arms, that victory in the field can be ensured. Let them read and ponder on what a French general says of our army in South Africa :—

> Each arm acted on its own. . . . This comradeship can only be fostered by daily intercourse in peace. . . . In England it exists neither between the different arms nor between one battalion and another. . . . Good fellowship in the fight can only be produced by good fellowship in time of peace, and the latter results from a *life in common.*[1]

This ideal is apparently realized in the Japanese army, where, it is said, "there are no regiments that have a reputation or a history which is not that of the whole army. Just as there are no crack corps, so there is no crack arm. The pay and standard of education and living of cavalry officers are the same as those of other branches of the service."

Our conclusions then must be :—

1. That courage and activity are the most valuable attributes in the field.

[1] Langlois, *Lessons from Two Recent Wars*, p. 70.

2. That these may wane when the body is exposed to unaccustomed wear and tear, unless this is foreseen and guarded against.

3. That habits of decision in tactical situations must be acquired by practice in peace-time.

4. That a doctrine permeating all ranks is essential to success in war.

5. The doctrine is "The Unison of Arms and the Resolute Offensive."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE TRAINING OF A SQUADRON

"Soignez les détails, ils ne sont pas sans gloire; c'est le premier pas qui mène à la victoire."—FREDERICK THE GREAT.

PAGES 104 to 142, *Cavalry Training*, are devoted to the training of the troop and squadron, and leave little to be desired as far as they take us. But those who wish to study the matter more fully, and to learn some of the "whys and wherefores," should read *Instructions for Cavalry*, by the Prussian General Von Schmidt, of whom it was said, "No man exercised so great an influence for good on our arm since the Great King." His theory was that "everything that is dull, cannot be easily understood or is uninteresting must disappear; the cavalry soldier has less need of this than any one. With such instruction he is quite useless, for to him more than to any one else are freshness, life, activity, mental quickness and vivacity necessary."[1] But most valuable are the glimpses which the book affords us of the Great King (Frederick) in his rôle as a trainer of cavalry. How thoroughly he "meant business," and how sternly any weakening, wavering, or in-

[1] Von Schmidt, *Instructions for Cavalry*, p. 7.

discipline was dealt with under that resolute autocrat, when not only an army but a nation was "in the making," may be seen from the following :—

It was an old and strict order of Frederick the Great that no cavalry officer should allow himself to be attacked at the halt; whoever does it should be cashiered.[1]

In the cavalry of Frederick the Great the squadron leader was authorized to sabre any *éclaireur* met riding at random across the front.[2]

Elliot mentions a further inspiriting regulation :—

If it is found that any soldier is not doing his duty, or is wishing to fly, the first officer or sub-officer will pass his sword through his body.

Frederick the Great, familiar with war, readily grasped the fact that the military discipline necessary in order to train men in the highest degree for the act of war must be stern and inexorable. No bank holiday, please-do-as-you-are-told soldiering for him. He knew what he wanted, and that time was limited.

On Sundays after divine service the men shall mount, as His Majesty considers it of the highest importance for the preservation of the horse that he should be ridden every day. The horses will then always be in wind, will not be stiff in the legs, and not get too fat. This His Majesty has found to be the case with his own horses. He desires to have horses in working condition, and does not care so much that they should be fat as that they should be sound and fit to march and stand fatigue.[3]

It must not be imagined that every officer who

[1] Von Schmidt, p. 227. [2] *Ibid.* p. 73.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 13.

rides at its head can train or lead a squadron. Those who can do both in perfection are few and far between. An apprenticeship of several years under various good leaders, added to natural ability, good horsemanship, an eye for country, a thorough sympathy with both his men and horses, are a few of the talents required to make a good squadron leader. But if a regiment is so fortunate as to possess even one good squadron leader, there will soon be found, especially among the junior officers, many to imitate him, and thus one good squadron leader makes many.

"A," the good squadron leader, is easily recognized in the field; he rides well away from his squadron, confident that they will obey his word or signal; his squadron know his ruses and plans, and move smoothly, ready to act at the indicated speed in any direction signalled by him. They are led covered from view,[1] duly avoiding or overcoming obstacles, quietly picking their way; the leader is now far to the front, with his eye on the enemy; his second in command passes any signals which are made. Suddenly pace is increased, and the squadron is galloping along under the crest of the hill, the cover which they know without an order he wishes them to utilize; then the troops wheel into line, "direction the enemy"; a defensive flank is dropped back, or an offensive flank pushed up; whilst the enemy's leader, taken by surprise, is making up his mind, A's

[1] Every manœuvre which is not founded upon the nature of the ground is absurd and ridiculous.—Lloyd's Maxims.

squadron has drawn swords and is upon him with a mighty cheer.

"B," the indifferent squadron leader, nervously and fretfully jobbing his horse in the mouth, rides *near* his squadron, at which he constantly looks back to see if the men have not already got out of dressing or committed some fault. Querulously addressing his second in command or sergeant major, he asks some foolish question; already he wants some one to lean on. His squadron moves round from behind some cover, where he has unwisely placed it, at an uneven pace, his ill-bitted horses tossing their heads in pain. Now he executes some movement; but before it is completed, he has given another order to "form squadron," which formation he forthwith regards with disapprobation from a flank and at some 20 yards from his squadron. He has no eyes for the enemy; two patrols have been sent out who *ought* to inform him. He gets the information right enough, but riding, as he is, near his squadron, which is walking now, he has barely time to give an order to increase the pace and then "left shoulder" towards the enemy, who are getting to one flank, before he notices his swords are not drawn. To get this done increases the confusion in his squadron.

But enough has been said to show the difference in cavalry leaders. In a cavalry engagement A's squadron will beat B's nineteen times out of twenty. B, poor fellow, is a danger to the State, and generally not happy in his position. No man likes work which he performs indifferently. Will this kind of leader

ever charge unless he receives a direct order to do so, and even then will it be well done?

Take it all round, any officer who is up to the business of efficiently training and leading a squadron must possess qualities which would have rendered his career a successful one in any walk of life. It is impossible to enumerate the hundred and one cares, anxieties, and responsibilities which beset a squadron commander. But it is a good thing to mention what he should regard as his guiding stars. They are :—

1. Efficiency for war in men and horses.
2. Avoidance of mere samples of efficiency.
3. Constant steps taken to make the soldiers confident in their power to use their weapons with deadly effect.
4. To make every trooper self-reliant in danger or unusual circumstances, especially when alone.
5. To cultivate the offensive spirit and a determination to get at the enemy somehow.

1. Efficiency for war in men and horses. Men not worked hard in peace-time are quite useless in war, where they have the added privation of want of food and sleep. Active service is quite unlike peace service; in the latter a man often spends but an hour or two in the open and most of the rest of the day in grooming and cleaning up; these duties are, generally speaking, a pure waste of time, as far as cavalry is concerned, in war. Too much of this barrack-square soldiering is apt to unfit men and make them slack and tired after a long day's work, of which gillies, herdsmen, and keepers would think

nothing. Few officers are knowledgeable enough to be able to discern the difference between fit, hard horses and poor horses. Looking at the horse sideways on, the ribs may easily deceive one, but following a horse it is much more easily seen to which category he belongs. The poor horse is split up and hollow in the region of the muscles lying alongside the backbone. Feeling the neck is not a safe criterion —big neck muscles may merely mean that the horse has been fed on the ground; the appearance of the coat is also fallacious. A sharp canter of a mile should, however, furnish a good test, as the blowing and snorting of an untrained squadron and a soapy lather instead of a clear watery sweat at once tell their tale.

2. It is a common but most pernicious practice, instead of making the effort to train all men in the squadron up to a certain standard of knowledge and ability, to take some of the smart men and make them into "show" teams. It is obviously flat-catching to have a prize team of ten marksmen, whilst the rest of the squadron are indifferent rifle shots. A man who wins prizes year after year at tournaments and assaults-at-arms is not of value unless he teaches other men. Often he does not do this for fear they should come on, "until at last the old man was beaten by the boy." The best, though perhaps not the most showy, squadrons are those in which there is a recognized standard of efficiency in every exercise and attainment, below which no man is allowed to fall. The story is told of an inspector-

general of cavalry of past days, that, after the usual inspection, the commanding officer at luncheon said to him, "I should like you to see my regiment tent-pegging." "Certainly," was the reply. Arrived on the maidan, about forty men had paraded. "But," said the I.G.C., "you asked me to come and see your *regiment* tent-peg, and I wish to do so." The regiment was forthwith paraded, and the first squadron's exhibition was quite sufficient to expose the fallacy of "samples."

3. See under heading "the personal weapon" in chapter on Training of the Man.

4. Self-reliance may be gained by giving the individual various tasks to carry out by himself and on his own initiative. The return for this form of "casting the bread on the waters" is not immediate, but directly the regiment goes on manœuvres or on service, the result between a squadron trained on this system and one where this is not done is most marked.

The squadron in which every man can read a map and orient himself (and this is now not exceptional) moves with perfect confidence on the line marked out for it, and if "held up" in front at once proceeds to find a way round or through. Squadrons trained to this degree may be confidently expected to give great results when employed with independent cavalry or as contact squadrons.

From this it will be seen that the education of the modern working classes has been exploited and improved upon to a very high degree in the cavalry

squadron and regimental school. Cavalry work, which would have been a severe test of map-reading[1] and troop-leading to a subaltern officer of cavalry thirty-five years ago, is now within the powers of every sergeant and corporal, and most of the men. To attain this has meant hard work for the regimental officer, and it is doubtful, if the work had not been largely delegated to the section leader, and thereby a proper chain of responsibility established, whether such progress would have been made.

Competitions between sections and troops, the former for choice, work great things in a squadron. If the minds of sixteen section leaders are all at work to find out the best way to train a recruit in various exercises, to feed a horse to the best advantage with the forage available, to get the best shooting average, and so on, it is obvious that the squadron leader has a good chance of disseminating his knowledge, when found out, through his squadron, whilst an interest is given to the work which is perfectly invaluable. Certainly men, who have to go through four or five months' hot weather in the plains of India with the thermometer occasionally at 115° in the verandah, want these mental exercises and interests just as they want games of hockey, cricket, and football in the evening to keep them sound in wind, limb, and mind.

In every respect competition is a healthy lever in training; only quite recently a squadron which,

[1] The tests in map-reading for a field officer for tactical fitness for command and for a cavalry trooper for service pay were at one time almost identical.

mirabile dictu, stopped all smoking for some weeks before shooting, were successful in winning an army rifle competition. Above all things, it acts in putting a stop to the waste of time which is so frequent an occurrence, where there is no spur to prevent it. It is distressing to see a troop of men and horses standing in line, whilst one individual goes through some exercise, or jumps some fences; a clever squadron leader will never permit this, he will point out to the troop or section leader that the remainder would be much better occupied in "suppling" their horses, or making cuts and points, till their turn arrived:[1] and that there is no reason why they should not light a pipe meanwhile. These amenities make things go easier.

Again, when on the march, or going to or returning from a field day, by means of judging distance on prominent objects (to be checked afterwards from the map), or by noticing the features of the country and subsequently answering questions on them, or by guessing what is on the other side of a hill, habits of observation which are invaluable in a cavalryman may be inculcated. This last is a capital exercise, and one which the Duke of Wellington practised. It is related that he was posting with a friend, and they passed the time in guessing what was behind the next hill. His friend remarked how often he was right in his guesses. Wellington replied, "Well, it is what I have been practising all my life." This instruction

[1] There is an additional reason for this, in that, if one horse refuses, the next two or three who have seen him do so will probably do the same. Horses are extremely impressionable.

is best delegated to section leaders, since a squadron, or even troop, is too unwieldy for this kind of education, which is specially one which should aim at bringing the slower and more stupid men up to a good level. The Germans rightly lay the greatest stress on the fact that collective perfection is only attainable by individual excellence, and this can only be obtained by individual instruction.

It is not in the brigade nor even in the regiment that dismounted work can be taught, but it is there that the effects can be seen. It is in the troop and the squadron that men should be taught to be quick, not hurried, in getting on and off their horses, and it must be done without the old-fashioned caution in the navy, "Five-and-twenty for the last man up the rigging."

A brigade is manœuvring against an enemy; a house, a garden, a clump of trees is seen, which, if seized and held by rifle fire, will prove a most valuable pivot of manœuvre. A squadron is ordered to seize it. Now is the time to see whether men have been taught their work in the squadron. Are they awkward in getting off their horses? Is there delay in handing over the horses to the Nos. 3? Is there uncertainty what to do with the lances? Are proper precautions taken? If the men have been well taught, they will be ready to meet with fire the opposing squadrons sent to seize it. And further, when the meeting between the brigades takes place, a well-trained squadron will have had time to mount again, and will be on the spot to

throw in a flank attack, which may decide the fight. The cavalryman must learn that never is the difference between cavalry and infantry to be observed more than when cavalry are acting dismounted.

A whole brigade may have to act dismounted. One not trained in the work will leave its horses behind and become inferior infantry. If the squadron training has been well done, they will act like a swarm of bees, trying here, trying there, everywhere *moral* and movement, till the weak spot is discovered; and then the rush will be made with an irresistible force in the firing line, and no slow pushing up of supports and reserves.

We do not wish to see cavalry always getting off their horses and trying everywhere to shoot their enemy out of each bit of difficult ground, but neither do we wish to see a regiment or brigade sitting helplessly in mass with an infantry or cavalry patrol holding a defile in front of them, unable to turn them out because the ground prevents them galloping at it. Von Bernhardi says:[1]

> Moreover, in the power of holding the balance correctly between fire and shock, and in the training of the former never to allow the troops to lose confidence in the latter, lies the real essence of the cavalry spirit. This, whether it be in the working out of some great strategical design, or in joining hands with the other arms to obtain by united fire action some common purpose, implies a balance of judgment and absence of prejudice of the rarest occurrence in normal natures.

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[1] Von Bernhardi, *Cavalry in Future Wars*, p. 90.

The practical problems, which invariably follow upon contact with the enemy, placed before his subalterns, unexpectedly for choice, by means of flags or real troops, and their proposed solutions, actually carried out, and then followed by a discussion, constitute the best and most useful work done by a squadron leader. If his imagination fails him, he must read up instances. Nor should he forget to give them problems which are what would be called unfair in a test examination, because the odds are too great, or the situation too difficult. He can and should explain this later, *coram populo*, but meantime it is just such problems which come to try the cavalry officer most highly. For if he is doing his duty he must constantly find himself in scrapes, and what our ancestors called "outfalls," in which the life and liberty of his men, and more, victory and honour, depend on his action. Often enough a rapid dispersal with a prearranged rendezvous is the only rational course and alternative to defeat or heavy and useless loss. Again, a bold front shown or a feint at attack may give time to warn others or to get to cover.

These problems come as too much of a surprise in war for the ordinary individual, unless he has acquired character and a large degree of confidence by frequent exercises in peace-time such as those indicated above. But, thus equipped, and steeled, as it were, by a doctrine of resolution, the officer or non-commissioned officer will perhaps call to his mind some saying such as "a mounted man and a shower of rain can get through anywhere." In an

instant he has drawn swords, indicated, first, the line of attack, and second, the rendezvous after dispersal, then with a cheer or view-holloa he goes at them. His bold and rapid course of action pulls him through with little or no loss.[1] The Japanese *Cavalry Training*, p. 57, says :—

> From commander to privates all cavalry soldiers must be accustomed to act on their own initiative throughout the various trainings and instruction, and in all cases should observe the following rule :
>
> Attack—but do not be attacked.

Problems can be found in the support of mounted attacks by fire, dismounted attacks, rearguard actions, the defence or attack of positions taken up in farms or kopjes by flankguards or rearguards, feints made to draw the enemy or distract his attention, the precautions necessary at a halt to water or when in bivouac, the scouting of an enemy's outpost line or in getting into a position before dawn, the passage of obstacles and defiles, and so on. Always remember to vary the ground, conceal the enemy's numbers, and insist on decisive action. In practice, in cavalry matters, the wrong action taken in a resolute fashion is sometimes preferable to right action arrived at after vast consideration.

The reflection on our British cavalry made, we believe, by a cavalry officer, that it was well drilled but badly instructed for war in 1899, appears to be a

[1] Taking an instance which comes to mind : a troop of cavalry on outpost duty at Colesberg found themselves cut off at dawn by some 500 Boers ; instantly they rode at the enemy, and, with small loss and doing some execution with their lances, came out.

genuine and well-founded one. How to escape it in future must be our squadron leaders' chief concern. Napoleon said: "It is not my genius that suddenly reveals to me, in secret, what I should say or do in an unforeseen circumstance. It is reflection, it is meditation. I always work at dinner, at the theatre; at night I wake up to work."

Above all, let us study in our instruction how best to make *moral* go hand-in-hand with method; without this what army can do great things? Have not civilization, education (conducted on our own lines), the insidious lessening of animus all conspired against our soldier's *moral* in war? How much simpler and more effective was the *modus operandi* of the Zulu Impis clearly enunciated in their war chant, "If we go forward we conquer, if we go back we die"; their ruler invariably putting to death all who returned from an unsuccessful expedition.

Conclusions

1. That interest must be sustained.

2. That with cavalry above all arms, there is a need for a very stern discipline.

3. That only a really good man can lead a cavalry squadron.

4. That flat-catching must be sternly discountenanced.

5. That a wise delegation of certain points of instruction and horse-management to section leaders will have valuable results.

CHAPTER XIX

THE TRAINING OF THE HORSE

We have only to consider the contingencies of service in the cavalry to come to a conclusion that the officer or man who begins a campaign on a well-trained horse has many chances in his favour against him who enters it riding an indifferently-trained animal; and no more striking instance of this can be brought forward than the circumstances of the Prince Imperial's death in Zululand. The horse in this case was ridden by an excellent horseman, but it was well known to be awkward to mount, with the result that, when suddenly attacked by a rush of Zulus, the Prince was unable to mount and get away.

But the chance in the rider's favour[1] is not the only consideration; the work which a well-trained, well-balanced, equably-minded horse will do, and

[1] The cavalry soldier is often required to perform independent duties and penetrate far into the enemy's lines under conditions entailing danger and hardship. He should, therefore, not only be brave, strong, and determined, but also intelligent, enthusiastic, deliberate, and calm. He must be able to act on his own initiative in accordance with the orders he receives and the situation of the moment. His horse is the cavalryman's best weapon. The soldier should prize his horse more than his own body, and thus in an emergency he will be able to rely without fail upon this weapon. It is only when the foregoing qualities have been acquired by training and experience in the field that a man can call himself a true cavalry soldier.—*Japanese Cavalry Drill Regulations.*, 1907, 44 (trans.).

the accidents of all kinds, leading to disablement and time spent in the sick lines, which it will itself avoid and also allow its master to help it to avoid, are well exemplified in any day's hunting in a rough country. There is the so-called unlucky horse, who never goes out without hurting himself or his master. This unlucky horse is associated in our minds with a narrow forehead with a bump low down on it, a rapidly shifting ear, and a small eye showing too much white.

The really ill-tempered horse is not fit to mount a cavalryman, whose life may depend on the behaviour of his horse; though here it must be confessed that some horses with very bad characters have been trained by real masters of the art to be good and reliable animals.

Not long ago the ideal laid down in training a horse for cavalry work was to make him as "clever across country as a good hunter, active and handy as a polo pony, and reliable as a shooting horse." Nor is it advisable to lower that ideal. Major Noel Birch in his excellent book, *Modern Riding*, tells us "the ideal is an excellent one and seldom impossible if the training is scientific."

A lack of imagination prevents the soldier, who has not undergone the vicissitudes of active service, from quite grasping the situations which cavalry work may bring about for him, since, whilst acting as a scout, any cavalry soldier may be called upon to engage in personal combat, to swim a rapid river, again to leave his horse standing alone in the open

whilst he creeps over a ridge to reconnoitre a valley, or to ride for his life or freedom over stiff fences or big ditches. *À propos* of this, a story is related of Seydlitz. He had been telling Frederick the Great that a cavalryman should never be taken alive. One day the King was riding with him over a bridge, and in order to try and prove him wrong, gave an order to the advanced guard to face about and close one end of the bridge, and to the next files coming on similarly to close the other end. He then asked Seydlitz what he would do now. Seydlitz put his horse at the parapet and leapt over it into the stream. This was a high trial for the manners of the horse as well as the determination of the man.

Undoubtedly a good swordsman on a perfectly trained horse should account for any three men of ordinary ability mounted on average horses. Napoleon said that "two mamelukes could make head against three French cavalrymen, but that one thousand French cuirassiers could easily beat fifteen hundred mamelukes." One showed high individual training of man and horse in single combat, and the other collective training as a troop or squadron. Both are difficult of attainment, and both point to considerable trouble, forethought, and knowledge on the part of the trainer.

In the days of the professional soldier the training of the horse was probably at a higher standard than at present, because it was made plain to every man's mind that a good horse meant honour, profit, and safety to him. There was, therefore, as much

competition for a horse which was likely to train well, and for a trained horse, as there is nowadays for a finished hunter or polo pony trained on similar lines.

In all ages there have been some men who could do wonders on horses quite unrideable by others, but the exceptions are not to the point. We have to consider how to train horses in a manner suitable to cavalry work.

In the first place, concurrently with his physical development, a point requiring the closest attention, the squadron horse must be trained to answer to certain conventional aids, so that any man in the squadron who applies these will find the horse answer implicitly to them. Now, let any one who wishes to study the aids exhaustively, and set up a line of conduct in the training of the horse for himself, turn a fresh young horse loose in a riding-school or enclosed manège, and keep him on the move, with a whip, if necessary. Let him note how the horse bears and uses his head, neck, leg, forehand, and haunches, as he bends and turns. The most correct aids are those indications by the reins, weight of body, legs, whip, and spur which a rider applies, so as to produce the natural preliminary attitudes for the flexion, pace, or movement desired.

If the observant horseman follows this line, he will find that he must make a rule, first, not to apply unnatural aids, and secondly, not to apply more than one aid at a time in the early stages of instruction of either man or horse.

Now take for instance the case of a horse which turns *on his shoulders* at a sharp gallop; it will be

noticed that he stops immediately after turning; but if, on the other hand, he turns *on his haunches* at the gallop, it is with a view to going on in his new direction at the same or a faster pace. Therefore the rider will do well to collect his horse on the haunches as he turns at the gallop, if that is the pace at which he wishes to continue in the new direction. Whereas if he turns, meaning to stop, he will pull one—say the left—rein, and (in the later stage of the training) add the aid of the drawn-back left leg to circle the horse's quarters round his forehand.[1]

Such will be the outcome of his observations on the loose horse in the manège, and following this system he will fix in his own mind, with the assistance of the book, a list of natural aids. The fact is, that nature has taught the horse to act in such a way as to utilize the mechanism of his head, neck, body, limbs, and even tail to the greatest advantage in his movements. We note these and adapt them to the aids, which we can apply by means of our mechanical devices, such as the reins, and by our natural devices, such as the legs and the weight of the body.[2]

Habits of long standing have accustomed horsemen

[1] For practical riding, however, turning on the forehand is not advocated.

[2] At the same time these natural movements are not all that we demand of a horse; we must therefore add the proviso that with the weight of a rider on the horse's back, some of the natural turns, and twists, and bearings can be, and need be, improved on. For instance, by means of the bit and legs, we pull a polo pony on to his haunches, and then turn him with the snaffle in order that on slippery ground we may save a slip, slide, or fall, which would very probably occur if we let him turn on the forehand in his own natural and easiest way. Nor does every horse, as he moves along at the walk, trot, or gallop, or as he jumps, necessarily do so in the best or safest way; he will often slouch, as we would describe it in a man, in doing

to apply, often quite unknown to themselves, certain aids to which their horse answers. They are often incorrect, slovenly, or not to the best advantage of horse or man, but their owners are satisfied, and often with a very inadequate repertoire. But when it is a question of fighting on horseback, we want to get a lightning-like system of aids, so that we may get where the adversary least expects us, or wishes us to be, and kill him. The man with experience in riding, a quick eye, a blood-horse under him, which he himself has trained, can "play with" one or two, or even three, adversaries who have not these advantages.

Undoubtedly since 1902 steps have been made towards an improvement in the training of the squadron horse. There are fewer "shooting stars," that is, horses who bolt out of the ranks, and fewer horses who refuse to leave the ranks; the horses go better across country, and are, generally speaking, suited for campaign riding. Under the old Canterbury system much time was spent with a view to showing up a good ride of *haute école* animals, whilst the new system aims at training a horse which will go well in the ranks, and will be generally useful on a campaign, either in single combat or for a scout's riding, or for work in the ranks.

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so. We then use the aid of bit, leg, spur, or whip to make him go up to his bit, which we know by experience is a better fashion than his natural mode of carrying himself.

Many a slack rider has let his horse, when he was wearily plodding his way home after a long day's hunting, fall and break his knees; whereas, if the animal had been well balanced by the strong pressure of the legs and warning spurs, and light hand on the curb, of a good and alert horseman, he would have reached home safely.

The horse is now trained a great deal in the open, whereas under the old system it was trained almost entirely in a school or manège, and not in the open. Whilst by no means underrating the value and convenience of a riding-school, there is little doubt that the old system made the horse a stupid animal and quite unable to look after himself or his rider in a rough country.[1] Under the new system the limited intelligence of the horse is exploited to a considerable degree.

Whilst officers of continental cavalry spend considerably more time than English officers in the training of their remounts, this is to some extent counterbalanced by the opportunities which the latter have of riding to hounds over difficult country, pig-sticking, and playing polo. For the mêlée the latter is a splendid training, whilst the two former give an officer an eye for country, and a decision in crossing it, unobtainable in any other fashion.

After estimating the instruction and advantages gained by cavalry officers taking part in these and other sports, which are really a preparation for and the "image of war," it may be reasonably asserted that the British Government by no means gets the worst of the bargain.[2]

[1] The Boer system of training a horse not to fall in the antbear and porcupine holes was to put a native on the animal and lunge it where there were nests of these holes.

[2] The pose, however, of decrying *haute école* methods is a totally mistaken one. The finest all-round horsemen in the world are the masters of *haute école*, whilst some of the worst horsemen are the butchering hard-riders to hounds, who bunch up their reins in their mutton fists, and hold on by them till their mount stops pulling and going. They are little better than, though of another class to, the viceroy who said to his A.D.C., "Don't talk to me now ; don't you see I am busy riding?"

At the same time it is undoubtedly a slur on any cavalry officer that he should be unable to train a remount. If he is not a rich man, it is well worth his while to learn, so as to train his own polo ponies and hunters. Many officers do so most successfully. Scores of horses, cast as unruly animals, are, by the aid of some of our riding-school methods, quickly brought to hand, and turn out most useful and temperate hunters or polo ponies. A comparison of military and civilian horsemanship is not a desirable theme, but it is surprising how many of the horsemen of the nation, even those who ride to hounds and between flags, are profoundly ignorant of all-round horsemanship and horse-training. The writer recently counted only four horses, out of some twenty running in an important race at Punchestown, a right-handed course, which passed the stand with the right leg leading. The four who were leading with the right leg gained at least four or five lengths at the next fence, which is on the turn.

Very few six-year-old hunters answer to their rider's legs, or are really nice horses to ride. A bending lesson every day for a month in a good military rough-rider's hands would do them an immense amount of good.

One of the recent innovations which has done most to improving our squadron horses in cross-country work is the introduction of the free-jumping lane for remounts: thanks to which horses get used to jumping, and regard it as fun instead of a penance accompanied by jabs in the mouth.

Another most important factor in the training of remounts is the system of long reining. The colonel of a regiment, in which the horses were particularly well trained, assured me that he considered this proficiency was due principally to long reining. His system was to take a couple of non-commissioned officers, whom he found were getting too fat, and let them do all the long reining. When I saw them, neither of the long reiners were much too fat; both, from long practice, at often as many as fifteen or twenty remounts per diem, were such adepts that, in their hands, the remounts, as yet almost unbacked, had learnt nearly half their lessons. The value of this system no doubt depends largely on the operator. There may be something also in the adage, "Who drives fat oxen should himself be fat." The patient-minded man is an asset in this work.

A suggestion recently made that the reins should be carried from the bit to a pulley at the highest point of the pad, and then vertically to another pulley on the side, and so to the operator's hands, is full of common-sense, as it ensures the horse holding his head right whilst there is control of the hind quarters.[1]

A system of giving prizes for the best-trained remount encourages a very deserving class of man in cavalry regiments, and evidences to all that the commanding officer is taking an interest in their work; the danger is that the men sometimes confuse circus tricks with legitimate training for campaign

[1] *Cavalry Journal*, July 1910.

riding. If the commanding officer gets on the three or four best-trained horses before awarding the prize, and generally keeps an eye on the progress of the remounts in training, it will have a marked effect.

Above all, rough methods, shouting in the riding school,[1] and any attempt to hurry training should be discouraged; a horse takes a little time to learn in good hands, but it should be remembered that most of the gymnastics which he has to learn involve training muscles and sinews to an unnatural extent, and that this must be done with a weight on the horse's back which nature did not contemplate.

If there is one thing more important than another in the training of a squadron horse it is that he should be taught to walk well, quickly, and freely. By constantly placing the fastest walking horses at the head of the rides, and teaching the men to ride with a fairly loose rein, this is soon effected. The result in a regiment where this has been consistently done is surprising.

Once placed in the ranks the squadron leader should not lose sight of the horse, but watch his career. There is a key to every horse's mouth, so it is said; certain it is that, whilst one squadron commander will see his horses tossing their heads, poking their noses, and going with their jaws set against one side of the bit, without in the least knowing what is the matter, another officer would

[1] Experience shows that the noisiest instructors are almost invariably the worst; they are usually trying to appeal by means of their lungs to the rider's ears instead of demonstrating their meaning by an appeal to his sense of sight.

in a short half-hour have loosened the curb there, adjusted a nose-band or added a martingale here, and have discovered an injured jaw in two other cases. For the latter he would order his farrier to make a carrago nose-band, or would improvise a string bridle with ten or twelve feet of small cord, so that the horses could go on with their work.

Let us take an instance, then, of the actual value to the State of these two squadron commanders. In one case the horse becomes unmanageable from pain, develops bolting propensities, injures one or two riders, and is perhaps cast and sold for £5 as vicious. The value of the horse (£40 by purchase at four years' and £60 for two years' keep, etc.) is £100. In the other case the mouth is healed and the animal does eight or nine years' good service. The value to the State of an observant, skilled horse-manager as compared with an indifferent one is some £500 per annum. On service this value may be multiplied by 5 or 10.

CHAPTER XX

THE TRAINING OF THE MAN

1. That soldiers should make it their function to exert themselves to the utmost of their loyalty and patriotism.
2. That they should strictly observe decorum.
3. That they should prize courage and bravery.
4. That they should treasure faith and confidence.
5. That they should practise frugality.

(*Order issued by the Emperor of Japan in 1882.*)

THE standard of proficiency in cavalry work to which we wish to attain is a very high one; our men must, in the first place, be taught—

(A) To ride well.
(B) To be able to look after their horses.
(C) Rifle-shooting and fire discipline.
(D) The use of at least one personal weapon, when mounted, with good effect.
(E) Individuality, and to use their brains.
(F) Bodily and muscular development.

(A) RIDING

There is no doubt that our methods of teaching riding have greatly improved of late years.[1] The

[1] The material common-sense changes made in regard to the comfort, amusements, health, and pay of the cavalryman, in common with the other arms, is one of the most marked advances in the army of to-day.

recruit is not made afraid of his horse, and of his work in the riding-school, as he often was under the old régime. From the day he joins, no opportunity should be lost of teaching the recruit that amongst his first duties is to love, honour, and have a pride in his horse. He certainly will not recognize this duty, if, as under the old "cast-iron" system, his horse becomes the means of applying an unpleasant discipline to him.

Further, he is now taught to ride in the open, and over a natural country in many cases, picking his own line. In fact he is taught campaign riding, rather than as formerly the elements of *haute école*; the latter plan was by no means unsuitable if the man had the previous knowledge of riding which many men, brought up in the country, joined with forty or fifty years ago.

(B) Soldier's Care of Horses

Of all instructions to be given to the young soldier the most difficult is that in campaigning horse-management.

It should be explained that the care of his own horse in a campaign is quite a different matter in the cavalry from what it is in the artillery; in the latter the horses are always under the master's eye in the first place, and in the second they are kept at a uniform pace, whereas in the cavalry men are detached here and there, and it is only by the individual's care of his mount that the latter can win through a

campaign. In fact the difference is as great as if, instead of carrying on his business under one roof, Mr. Whiteley had to send out all his young men and women in troops and sections and as individuals to effect sales. It would certainly lead to a very great diminution of profits, and just as in any great business the profits are effected by small and seemingly petty economies, so in a regiment it is the small economies of horseflesh which mount up to a great sum in a month or so of campaigning. It is the regiment or squadron, in which, from the start, the man has been taught always to dismount at every opportunity, always to off-saddle and massage his horse's back when a spare quarter of an hour affords him time to do so, always to give his horse a chance to nibble the short grass, or drink a few go-downs of water, always to report without fail a loose clinch or a swelling on the back, even if the latter is only the size of a shilling, that will constantly show a good return of sound horses. A bad system of horse-management will in a week incapacitate as many horses from work as will a general engagement.

As a rule great things are expected of cavalry in the first week of a campaign; these great things are often to be carried out *at all costs*—all costs in this case meaning in many instances half the horses over-ridden and a crop of sore backs[1] and incipient injuries

[1] General Romer, after the American Civil War, wrote as follows: "Bad saddles destroy more horses than are lost in action."

It is certain that *wet* horse blankets put on under a saddle will give more sore backs in one day's march than will occur in a month of ordinary marching.

incurred which the cavalry will not get over for months after. There is also another difficult matter to cope with in the cavalry; it is as follows:—

The ordinary soldier has no idea of the limit of his horse's capacity for work such as that soon gained by the hunting man or traveller on horseback. In peace-time he will not once in one thousand times be given a task which can possibly injure or cause him to override his horse; further, the latter invariably gets back to his stable, gets the best of food and a rest, or goes to the sick lines if he is evidently out of sorts; the responsibility of overriding his horse is thus not fixed, and the man escapes any punishment. As the man is riding a Government horse and not his own animal, he does not suffer pecuniarily.

We believe that enough has been shown to warrant our saying that the cavalry of an army where (1) a good system of campaigning horse-management[1] has been instilled into the individual, and where (2) the officers, from those who order the task to those who superintend it, have the knowledge to do so with a sense of the horse's capacity as affected by work, food, and drink, weight carried, nature of terrain, will, at the end of one month's work, possibly have lost 15 per cent of its horses; whereas

[1] It has been said that "it is a peace theory that mounted infantry are as good as trained cavalry; it is a war fact that their ignorance of horse-management makes them five times as costly at the commencement of a war." However that may be, we know that under first-rate officers, a proportion of whom have since joined the cavalry to its advantage, there was exemplary horse-management in some corps of mounted infantry, not only in the late South African War of 1899-1902 but long ago in the eighties.

in the cavalry where these matters are not understood, only 15 per cent of the horses will remain available. What was the case in Napoleon's invasion of Russia? A statement called for by the emperor at Witebsk on the 29th July, twenty-five days after the river Niemen had been crossed, gave the loss as follows: Murat's cavalry[1] reduced from 22,000 to 14,000 horses, the cavalry of army corps by half, Latour Maubourg's from 10,000 to 6000. Later, on the 9th November, only 1900 horses were left to this immense force of cavalry. The loss by fatigue in the campaign of Ulm, lasting little more than a fortnight, was less, 46 per regiment. One campaign resulted in a victory within eighteen days, whereas the other went on long enough to bring the loss and criminal waste of horses home to those responsible. In campaigns brought to a close in a few days by desperate though successful strategy, these matters, like many matters which occur in small campaigns against natives, never come to notice.

This subject has been gone into at some length under the training of the man, because without his co-operation in the individual care of his horse no cavalry general can hope to be successful. His best-laid schemes "gang aft agley." The cavalry soldier should feel that he will get a horse, good, bad, or indifferent, accordingly as he shows himself a good, bad, or indifferent horseman and horsemaster, and should be made perfectly aware that he will be punished with the greatest severity for every act of carelessness, neglect, or ill-treatment of his horse.

[1] Picard, *Cavalry of the Revolution and Empire*, vol. ii. p. 94.

Whilst, on the other hand, a well-cared-for horse should be a certain passport to the good graces of his leader. A squadron leader, careless of this mode of procedure, never has good and well-cared-for horses on service.

A very successful way of teaching the soldier to care for his horse is to let it form part of the test before he passes from the recruit stage to that of the trained soldier, that he should by himself ride his horse to a place 70 to 100 miles away, report on some bridge or other topographical feature, and return, enough money being given him for the subsistence of himself and his horse for the necessary number of days—the condition of the latter being carefully scrutinized on his return.

Other forms of long-distance rides and patrols (as distinct from long-distance races, a cruel form of competition with which no horse-lover can have any sympathy) are most useful, as they teach the men how to regulate their paces, spare their horses, and judge distance by time and pace.

Often arrangements have been made to take some N.C.O.'s out with the regimental pack of hounds, local pack, or on a drag-hunt or paper-chase; all these forms of instruction teach the men to ride fast in a reasoned fashion and not in the Johnny Gilpin and "making the running" style of the amateur horseman or horsewoman, and to think properly of their horse, and not as the old lady, who said to the coachman, when he had reported the brougham horse was lame, "He is a horse and he *must go*."

That the care of the horse is the weak link in the cavalry chain, and the most difficult one in which to give such instruction as may render it strong and reliable, is clear. Every day we get fewer men accustomed before they are recruited, to work with horses, and the use of the horse as a means of locomotion, by all ranks in Great Britain, is quickly dying out. Strong measures are needed to counteract our daily growing ignorance of horsemastership.[1]

(C) Shooting and Fire Discipline

The cavalry are now armed with a rifle equal to that of the infantry, and can hold their own in rifle-shooting. The greatest interest is taken in this exercise; tests similar in all respects to those in vogue in the infantry are exacted before the man is entitled to get his full rate of pay. Practically all officers and many N.C.O.'s of cavalry now possess Hythe certificates,[2] and there is no reason why fire discipline in the cavalry should not be equal to that in the infantry. In many cavalry regiments it undoubtedly is so. In others there is too much talking and the Jack ashore kind of behaviour, which renders difficult the control of the larger parties. If the

[1] "The idea of drawing cavalry recruits from the best horse-breeding districts," says Denison, "is not original. Zenophon says that Argesilaus did so" (p. 41). It is certain that our best cavalry soldiers come from Ireland now.

[2] Von Bernhardi, *Cavalry in Peace and War*, p. 273, says, speaking of German cavalry: "In the cavalry there is a want of trained instruction, and most regiments are even reduced to borrowing infantry under-officers and officers to assist in their musketry training, who are then also employed to teach the rudiments of the cavalry fight.

officers recognize that good fire discipline is essential in order to kill their enemy, they will take more trouble to instil it. As our cavalry are undoubtedly the best shooting cavalry in the world, it is a pity to spoil the ship for this ha'porth of tar (fire discipline).

(D) The Personal Weapon

Fencing and single stick (and other exercises such as boxing, non-essential in themselves, but which quicken the eye and make the man cool in combat) will do a great deal towards teaching men the use of the sword, while a little tent-pegging and a great deal of work at the dummies will teach the unrivalled value of the queen of weapons.

In many cavalry training-grounds can now be seen an acre of ground in which are a score or more of self-adjusting dummies of varying heights, and representing horse and foot; there is no better practice than to send half-a-dozen horsemen into this tilting ground at a sharp gallop, and let them practise for the mêlée for a minute or so.

The French cavalry lay great stress on these pointing exercises; they do not expect to turn out many real swordsmen in a squadron, but they want every man to be able to ride his horse at an enemy, and run him through.

(E and F) Mens sana in corpore sano

In addition to the four headings mentioned above, there is the preparation requisite to meet the

hundred-and-one eventualities of detached work and miscellaneous duties.

Whilst it is quite impossible to foresee or delimitate these, there are a number of exercises and sports which tend to make a young man (and keep an old man) not only supple in his body and sound in wind and limb, but also alert in mind: to put it shortly, they make him more "handy," more able when left to himself or with a few others to carry out his duty; they give him more confidence in himself; they make the town-bred man approximate more to the pioneer. The ordinary lad of eighteen brought up in a town knows nothing of the country in which his soldiering and scouting will be done, and is not able to do a great many things which a country-bred lad has learnt as a matter of course. On the other hand, the town-bred lad is undoubtedly quicker at picking up and assimilating knowledge. Both have their good qualities, and both can be made into excellent cavalry soldiers by training in the particular points in which they are by breeding deficient.[1]

Let us now glance at the sports which tend to make men handy and useful.

Every cavalryman should learn to swim, since, unless he can do so, he may either not attempt to cross a swollen river, or he may get drowned in doing so. Not only this, but he should be able to make his horse cross a deep and rapid river whether he can

[1] The Japanese realize how far strength and activity go to make up for the unsuitability of the race for cavalry work, and from the moment a recruit enters barracks, every effort is made to render him active and energetic.—*Education and Training of the Japanese Divisional Cavalry*, p. 13.

swim or not himself. Some of us still remember the disaster to a cavalry regiment when crossing a river on the frontier.

Many sports and exercises—to be able to swim, to row a boat, and so on—are not essentials in the training of a cavalryman, but they are very desirable; and when an opportunity of practising them occurs, every commanding officer should make his men take advantage of it.

Again, in the *Manual of Military Engineering* there is a great deal which may be said to be more suited to pioneers, and a knowledge of which cannot be expected from every cavalry soldier. Knotting and lashing, construction of rafts, scientific demolitions of railways and telegraph lines come under this heading. A certain number of men in each squadron are detailed to act as pioneers, but since in most cavalry operations there is a very good chance of these not being available at the critical moment, it is well that every man should be brought up to a good standard of knowledge in all forms of pioneering, rough field fortifications, and in tapping a wire, blowing up a culvert, etc., etc.

Another point over which too much time must not be spent, but which is for the benefit of the soldier, especially in his first few trying days of active service, is a slight knowledge of cooking, and especially how to make use of flour; otherwise you may find the men throwing away the flour because they do not know how to cook it. The poorer classes in Great Britain nowadays nearly all buy bread instead of

making it from flour once a week, on baking day, as in the old days.

It will obviously be for the good of a regiment or brigade of cavalry that it should leave its barracks for a month in the summer, and go for choice to some seaside place where there is an estuary, and practise exhaustively the various non-essential items of instruction indicated above. Such a change of scene is immensely appreciated by the men, who get very tired of barrack routine, and it gives the officers opportunities for instruction which they do not usually possess in barracks.

New ground is worked over, practice in camping duties and expedients takes place, and, last of all, there is time and opportunity to carry out thoroughly and practically the instruction; there is time for the men, because they are freed from many duties which are necessary in barracks, and for the officers, because they have the whole day before them, and do not go on leave. If a whole cavalry brigade has gone to such a camp of instruction, the element of competition may be introduced in many ways, which will help to stir the most sluggish. The desire of the distinction of being the best swimming squadron in the brigade will make his comrades hurry up many a slow, inert lout, who could do better if he tried, and this will, indirectly, cause him to have more confidence later in himself.

Again, if two rival squadrons are marched down to a river, and find, a hundred yards apart, for each squadron a similar amount of rafting and bridging

material, and instructions are given to them to prepare means for a small column to cross the river, the interest excited by the competition will be considerable. In a case like this marks may be given for (1) the most thorough arrangements for the crossing, including orders by the commanding officer; (2) the best and most workmanlike construction of boats, rafts, etc.; (3) the speed in carrying out the work; (4) silence; (5) tidiness, such as, for instance, all arms, extra clothing, etc., being placed in an orderly manner, so that they can be resumed, if necessary, after dark, or at a moment's notice.

In the sands, usually to be found at any seaside place, good practice can be gained in digging hasty field fortifications without the labour involved in doing so in the stiffer soils.

In the late South African War one might sum up the situation in a few words: our regular soldiers had need to be more like colonials, and our colonials more like regular soldiers. Some of our soldiers lost their way a mile from camp; our colonials never did this, but their views of military discipline were curiously lax. Our soldiers were the victims of routine, and it cost them their lives often enough; our colonials could hardly be trusted to lay sufficient stress on an order to carry it out, but they were never at a loss for an expedient. Both looked after their own interests at the expense of the enemy, or even their own side.[1] Both were very brave; both fought and

[1] Les Hussards étaient d'ailleurs les maraudeurs par excellence; ils se sentaient encore de leur premier recrutement. On respectait ce penchant des troupes légères pour leur donner plus de mordant dans la poursuite à laquelle

scouted cunningly; but it came first and naturally to the colonial, who gave his enemy credit for slimness, and had a more cultivated imagination and better appreciation of the value of ground. In rearguards both "stuck it out," if anything, too long, rather than give the enemy an idea that they could be hustled.

It is suggested that instruction should never stop short of the actual and practical. Few educated people are able to understand how very little words convey to the ordinary untrained intelligence, and for how short a time, even if understood, theory is retained in the mind.[1]

Anything which is worth learning must be learnt as a well-known amateur billiard player and game shot taught himself. In billiards he first placed the balls again and again till he could make the difficult cannon; he then went on till he could make it twenty times running. Similarly, in regard to a difficult kind of shot, he went to a shooting school and had clay pigeons shot out in a particular way; at length having hit, he went on till he practically could not miss.

Theory

The theoretical instruction given by our officers to the men in lectures benefits, we verily believe, the

elles se trouvaient ainsi plus particulièrement intéressées.—Picard, *La Cavalerie dans les guerres de la Revolution et de l'Empire*, p. 201.

[1] "In teaching it is not sufficient for the teacher to express clearly what he means—the words may be to him quite clear, but the real question is, are they clear to the pupil, do they put his mind into a condition in which he follows and grasps the idea that the teacher would emphasize?"—Professor Culverwell on the Herbartian Psychology.

former quite as much as the latter. It benefits the officer, in the first place, because it compels him, if he is anxious to do his work well, to look up his subject thoroughly beforehand; and in the second place, because it accustoms him to speak in public more readily; and this may be of value not only to him but to the army and nation later. But his instruction should not be devoted entirely to professional subjects. It is a part of his duty to attend to the education of his subordinates in the subject of *moral*, and to develop by every means in his power their sentiments of bravery, straightforwardness, confidence in their leaders, and devotion to duty and patriotism. Without these as a foundation there are few who will adhere to the requirements of that discipline, without which, in the absence of religious fanaticism,[1] no difficult task in war will be carried through. There are sound grounds for saying that "if we examine the condition of the people we shall find that *moral* deteriorates in inverse proportion to advance in education."[2] Officers who have to deal with such conditions must not only know how to teach thoroughly, minutely, and convincingly, but must also study all branches of their profession in such a way that by their intellectual ability they may

[1] May not a trace of this religious fanaticism, however, be seen in the letter of an Irish soldier, who wrote home during the South African War of 1899-1902 as follows:—

"Dear mother, we are having a lovely time of it, shooting Protestants all day long, and no one to stop us."

[2] This view was expressed in 1907 by the commander of the 1st Japanese cavalry regiment.

earnestly and loyally interpret the true spirit that should animate a soldier.

In all the professions, trades, and handicrafts nowadays, with increased facilities for reading and book-learning, theory is overriding practice, apprenticeship is shortened or even dispensed with, the boy of to-day has read about and thinks he understands what the man of yesterday has been through and is still pondering over; and it is chiefly because we see so much weight being laid on theory, to the detriment of practice in the profession of arms, that we register this protest.

That we cavalry have learnt that parrot-like instruction cannot replace demonstration is evidenced by our *Method of Instruction in Riding in Cavalry*; in it we find first "that the instructor, after describing fully and clearly what he requires, should *illustrate* it," and later, "these instructions *carefully illustrated* by the instructor and understood by the recruit," etc., etc. At present in most cavalry regiments each squadron has a sand table, on which models of country are made, and map-reading is taught in a most practical manner.

The more the officers see of the men the better, and the horse gives an invaluable mutual ground of interest. We read in *The Truth about Port Arthur*:

> The battle for these hills was severe, and the coolness of our men was remarkable. If any of them ran away, or if any panic set in, it was the fault of the officers, for any officer whom the men respect and love in peace-time can rely on their steadiness in war.

How many Russian officers know and care for their men? For some reason or other they rarely mix with or among them, and know nothing of them or their habits, and bitter are the fruits they reap in war.

This is plain speaking, but it is in accordance with the dictates of common-sense that the superior and inferior must become of one mind in order to carry out their duties adequately.

By whatever means it may be done, it is the duty of every officer to check cynicism and grumbling amongst his subordinates, and to develop a high *moral.* It has been said that it is the "soldier's privilege to grumble." This is an absolutely wrong view; it is, instead, his glory not to grumble, but to face every kind of danger and trouble unflinchingly, and to make the best of it. Small worries overcome prepare the mind for facing great emergencies.[1]

With such a feeling throughout a regiment, what may it not do? Every man becomes a hero and a leader. The conduct of 500 heroes may temper the mind of an army.

[1] General Kleber, when his men, overcome by fatigue, refused to move a step farther, called them cowards. As they protested that they were at any rate always brave in a fight, he replied, "Yes, you are brave men, but you are not soldiers. To be a soldier is not to eat when you are hungry, not to drink when you are thirsty, and to carry your comrade when you cannot drag yourself along."—*Manuel du gradé de cavalerie.*

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THE END

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